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OLD

THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By Mr. SMITH.

Somers, whom misfortunes had humbled till fate could not awe nor death diſmay, ſtood calm as a Chriſtian in the craſh of worlds.

VOL. I.

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THE RUNAWAY;

OR,

THE SEAT OF BENEVOLENCE.

CHAP. I.

WHEN the ſun was haſtening towards the weſtern hills, that cloſed the diſtant view, the woe-worn Somers walked to the Avon's bank, there to beguile a melancholy hour in reading the ſorrows of others, and thus endeavour to loſe the recollection of his own.——Vain attempt! Scarcely had he ſeated himſelf and read a dozen pages, before his truant thoughts wandered from the ſubject, and traced the retroſpective view of happineſs that

once was his, but now conſidered loſt, never to be regained. "Ah, Louiſa!" cried he, "to memory ever true, but falſe to love; why have you thus forſaken me? Why at the altar did you regiſter your vows of eternal fidelity and affection, if your heart joined not in the ſacred oath? Was it to raiſe me to the pinnacle of human bliſs, that I might feel your loſs the more ſeverely? My infant too!—diſtracting thought.—It is too much, thus, as a huſband and a parent, to be bereft of all that can render life deſirable. Oh time—time! how tediouſly thy leaden hours paſs on! the evening comes, the morning follows, and nothing preſents itſelf but unavailing ſorrow."

While he ſat thus a prey to the anguiſh that wrung his heart, his attention was ſuddenly

ſuddenly arreſted by the ſound of a foot-ſtep, of ſome perſon who was walking round a ſmall rock that overhung the ſpot on which he ſat. In a few moments a young man, about one-and-twenty years of age, came in ſight, and, after viewing the river attentively, ſeated himſelf at the foot of an oak-pollard.

Somers was ſtruck with the appearance of the young man. His dreſs and manner plainly beſpoke him above mediocrity, while the deſpondency of his looks alarmed him for his ſafety. He ſaw him take a letter from a pocket-book, and, after reading it with attention, wipe a tear from his eye the ſubject had occaſioned. "Good Heaven!" exclaimed Somers, "what grief can poſſibly occupy the heart of ſuch a youth?—he ſurely

never can have felt the force of love! he never knew what it was to be deprived of a wife and child (for whom he felt a tender attachment), by thoſe whoſe duty it was to have cheriſhed her affection!—But perhaps he has loſt his parents, or wants a friend." He ſtarted from the ground, for the purpoſe of advancing towards him; but ſtopt, on perceiving him open a caſe which contained two miniatures richly ſet in diamonds. Again his tears began to flow; he preſſed them to his lips, while a ſigh beſpoke the real anguiſh of his heart. Once more he ſurveyed the river. Somers, dreading he had ſome fatal intent, and unable longer to ſtand a ſilent ſpectator of this diſtreſſing ſcene, immediately accoſted him:—"Pardon my preſumption," ſaid he; "I would not have intruded on your private ſorrows,

rows, but that I wiſh to be informed if it can lay in my power to alleviate them."

The young man, on the appearance of Somers, had haſtily put up the miniatures, and endeavoured to aſſume a chearful aſpect.

" Seek not, my young friend," continued Somers, " to hide your uneaſineſs: I have witneſſed it. Believe me, I do not aſk for the ſatisfaction of an impertinent curioſity; nor do I wiſh you to divulge any thing that may give you pain to mention."

The youth continued ſilent, and Somers, fearing he had taken too great a liberty, determined to withdraw: but firſt, pointing towards his habitation,

"Yonder houſe," ſaid he, "beneath the rock, is mine: if at this, or any future time, you ſhould feel the want of a friend, you may command me." Then, bowing reſpectfully, retired.

Cliffdown Lodge ſtood near the banks of the Avon, in the county of Glouceſter: a ſtupendous rock ſheltered it on the north; two riſing hills, covered with wood, protected it equally from the eaſt and weſtern winds; on the ſouth front was a lawn, the extremity of which was waſhed by the river, and the ſpot was conſidered beautifully romantic. In this recluſe ſituation lived Mr. Somers. He was (at the time I ſpeak of) about three-and-thirty years of age; had once poſſeſſed a lively, animated diſpoſition, but which had evidently been diſpelled

pelled by ſorrow, that now appeared viſibly ſeated in his countenance, and ſtrongly pourtrayed in his thin, emaciated form.

The only domeſtics he retained were a gardener, a man to attend his horſe, and two elderly women, who procured and dreſſed the few neceſſaries he required.

Somers poſſeſſed a heart truly benevolent: from having experienced want and ſorrow, which is generally its attendant, he was taught to alleviate it in others. The appearance of the young man had ſtrongly intereſted him in his favour: upon a nearer view of him he had diſcovered that his ſhoes were almoſt worn from his feet, his clothes and linen were duſty, and extreme fatigue ſeemed mingled with the uneaſineſs depicted in his

features, which the riſing bluſh occaſioned by his addreſſing him was not able to extinguiſh: yet, notwithſtanding theſe apparent marks of poverty, when he was accoſted he diſcovered a majeſtic deportment, a certain dignity of aſpect, blended with every accompliſhment that nature could beſtow, and which ſhone more conſpicuouſly from the tear that was viſible in his eye, and the duſty appearance of his attire.

Somers had ſcarcely ſeated himſelf in the arbour at his door, before he obſerved the young man entering the front gate.

He haſtily roſe to meet him, and taking hold of his hand conducted him into a parlour.

" Your

" Your offer of friendſhip," ſaid the youth, " to a perfect ſtranger, excites my wonder and admiration, and emboldens me (circumſtanced as I am) to crave your protection."

" I ſhould hope," rejoined Somers, " that an offer of friendſhip, where it is thought neceſſary, would not afford matter of ſurpriſe. The dejection I obſerved in your countenance made me eager to offer that friendſhip; and if you wiſh for pecuniary relief, you will find me more forward to adminiſter it than, I fear, you will be to aſk it. I know how to feel for another's ſufferings by the recollection of my own—(alas!" continued he with a ſigh, " how few there are can feel for me!)—You will materially oblige me by ſtating explicitly your ſituation, that

I may thereby know in what way I can be of ſervice to you."

"I am," replied the youth, "literally in want of bread, and know not where I ſhall find a reſting-place this night. I have parents, but ſo far removed, they know not what I ſuffer, or by what means I am reduced to . . . ."

He would have proceeded, but his heart was too full for further utterance.

Somers requeſted him to be compoſed, handed him a glaſs of wine and ſome cake, and rung the bell, deſiring coffee to be got ready.

After he had accepted this refreſhment, he proceeded.—

"It

"It may excite your wonder," ſaid he, "when I inform you my father is a perſon of family and fortune, and yet that I ſhould be obliged to ſolicit for ſome menial employment. The reaſons why I was obliged to leave the perſon in whoſe care I was entruſted, I cannot now relate: and, if I did, they ſo far exceed belief that I ſhould be looked upon as an impoſtor; therefore ſhall eſteem it a favour, as I have ſtrong reaſons for keeping it a ſecret, that you will not requeſt me to divulge who and what I am, or from whence I came: and I hope, when I aſſure you my deſire to perſevere in ſilence in this particular does not proceed from any thing that ought to draw a bluſh upon my cheek, you will do me the favour to believe me."

"Undoubtedly," replied Somers; "nor

will I offend you by requiring a further explanation. You ſay you are in ſearch of ſome menial employment; let me know of what nature the employment may be that you are in ſearch of. I have but a ſmall acquaintance, yet I will extend my enquiries as far as I am able, to procure for you ſome ſituation. In the mean time, what name am I to diſtinguiſh you by?"

The young man appeared greatly confuſed, and a tear ſtarted in his eye. "I never thought," ſaid he, "I ſhould be obliged to ſcreen myſelf under a borrowed name; but in this caſe . . . ."

Somers interrupted him: "I beg your pardon," ſaid he; "I did not wiſh to hear your name; but as you may not have thought of one, I will call you 'Theodore Somers;' if you have no objection, you

you ſhall paſs for a relation of mine: and now, Theodore," continued he, "let me hear what place you are capable of undertaking."

"I need not inform you," replied Theodore, "that I was not brought up for any profeſſion; yet, from the education I have received, I conſider myſelf capable of being a clerk in ſome office.

"This ſituation I have ſolicited through every town that I travelled; but the mortifying reception I frequently met with, in return for the application, and the tedious enquiries it ſubjected me to, reſpecting my friends and connections, made me relinquiſh any further application for ſuch a place; and having ſome knowledge of gardening, in which I took great delight when at home, I intended to exchange my dreſs, and apply for ſomething in that way."

"I have

"I have no connection," resumed Somers, "with mercantile men, with whom I could hope to fix you as a clerk; and as to the situation of a gardener, permit me to say, I think your appearance in that character would create suspicion, and subject you again to tiresome enquiry: it fortunately happens at this time I am making some improvements in my pleasure-garden; if you will assist me in the design by giving your opinion and instruction, I shall consider it a favour; in return for which, my house, table, and purse, are at your service."

Somers merely requested his advice respecting the improvement, fearing lest he should refuse to accept his offer of residing with him, unless he could be of some service in return.

Theo-

Theodore was grateful, and was preparing to thank him; but Somers inſiſted the obligation was on his ſide, and therefore requeſted he would ſay no more on the ſubject. He next furniſhed him with a change of linen and various other articles he had immediate occaſion for, and then threw down his purſe on the table, deſiring he would ſupply himſelf with ſufficient to purchaſe other neceſſaries.

Theodore requeſted he would lay him under no further obligation at preſent, but permit him firſt, by the exerciſe of his abilities, to mak. ſome ſmall return for his favour and protection.

Somers would not be denied; and finding his young friend ſo diffident, he put a twenty-pound note into his hand, and deſired

ſired he would oblige him with the acceptance of it.

There was a certain decided manner in Somers, peculiar to himſelf, in the action of delivering the note, that prevented Theodore from refuſing it; he therefore no longer heſitated, but taking it up, "The day will come," ſaid he, "if I can remain concealed for a time, that I ſhall have it in my power to make ſome compenſation for this unlooked for, and unbounded generoſity."

"Till ſuch time," rejoined Somers, "let this act, as likewiſe any other by which you may conceive yourſelf obliged, lay dormant, as I cannot endure to be reminded of favours which give me far greater pleaſure in beſtowing than you can poſſibly derive from their acceptance."

Theo-

Theodore bowed, and Somers left the room to give ſome neceſſary orders concerning providing an apartment for his young friend.

Again did Theodore take out the miniatures from his pocket, and being alone, ſeized this opportunity to thank his Creator for having conducted him where humanity dwelt, and thereby ſaved him from any further mortifying enquiries, ſuſpicious looks, the haughty repulſe of his apparent ſuperior, or contempt of menial officers.

While his heart was thus raiſed in gratitude to his God, and he was admiring the interference of his providence, which had led him through ſo many ſcenes to this ſequeſtered ſpot, Somers entered

entered the room: "I am happy, my young friend," ſaid he, "to find you thus engaged; and it gives me great pleaſure to know that your thoughts ſo perfectly coincide with mine, for if a ſparrow falls not from the houſe-top without divine permiſſion, and if every hair of our heads is numbered, how is it poſſible any act of ours can eſcape the notice of our God? or why ſhould we deſpair of his protection while we endeavour to do our duty? or how can we hope to eſcape puniſhment, when we are aware that our moſt ſecret thoughts, and the ſpring of all our actions, are known to him? But come, Theodore, with me; a plain but comfortable repaſt is provided for our ſupper, after which no doubt you will be happy to retire to reſt."

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

AT the dawn of the enſuing day Theodore left his chamber, and walked out to enjoy the beauty of the ſcene. The garden firſt attracted his notice: after purſuing his way through various paths and avenues, he ſtruck into a wilderneſs, and diſcovered a ſmall temple, over the door of which was engraved, "Sacred to Solitude." Theodore pauſed for a few moments, ruminating whether he ſhould commit a treſpaſs on the feelings of his friend by entering it: fearing leſt this ſhould be the caſe, he left the door, and followed the track that led paſt the ſide of the temple. Here his attention was ſuddenly taken up, by obſerving a window that was open; he involun-

involuntarily turned his head, and the firſt object which preſented itſelf was Somers: he was ſeated at a table, his head reclined upon his hand, and looking upwards; a tear ſtood glittering on his eye-lid, while he was engaged in ſurveying a painting before him of a lady and a child: a quantity of letters lay open on the table which he had been peruſing; he took up one, read a few paſſages in it, ſtarted from his ſeat, ſtruck his hand upon his forehead and exclaimed, "Oh, God, when will my ſorrows have an end!" Then raiſing his eyes towards heaven, ſent up a ſupplicating petition to his Creator.

Theodore dreaded leſt he ſhould be ſuſpected of wiſhing to pry into the cauſe of his friend's uneaſineſs, and therefore

fore haſtily left the ſpot, conſiderably impreſſed with the ſcene that had juſt preſented itſelf.

" Is it poſſible," ſaid he, " that a man who poſſeſſes a heart capable of feeling for, and relieving another's woes, and who addreſſes his God with ſuch fervency, ſhould be permitted to ſuffer ſo poignant an affliction as he ſeems at preſent to endure!"

Theodore had conceived a high opinion of his benefactor, and thought him far too worthy to merit misfortune; he was on the point of arraigning the juſtice of his Creator, when the words that Somers made uſe of on the preceding evening, that, ' he had learnt to feel for another's

other's ſufferings by the recollection of his own,' recurred to his memory.

" Amiable," ſaid he, " as my friend appears, yet this diſpoſition (unleſs I miſinterpret his expreſſion) he has acquired by misfortune. Even theſe culinary articles before me cannot arrive at perfection without the aſſiſtance of art: ſhall I then attribute to my Creator injuſtice by dealing with his creatures in ſuch manner as is moſt likely to contribute to their own benefit, and render them ornaments to ſociety? — Certainly not: hereafter will I be ſilent, nor murmur at his diſpenſations; confident that from the ſource of wiſdom and juſtice, tempered with mercy, there can come no wrong."

Somers now joined his young friend; and as the ſun ſweetly breaks forth from the cloud after a refreſhing ſhower, ſo did his eyes beam with pleaſure through a tear upon his approaching Theodore.

After the uſual congratulations of the morning had paſſed between them, and they had taken an early breakfaſt, Theodore intimated that he would go to Briſtol for the purpoſe of purchaſing ſome neceſſaries; and Somers having a friend to call upon, propoſed to accompany him.

With this intent they croſſed the river into Somerſetſhire, and after winding round the ſide of a hill, arrived at a ſmall cottage.

Somers tapped at the door, and was desired to enter.

On an elbow-chair, near the fire, sat an elderly lady, seemingly much debilitated through age and sickness.

"Where is your fair charge?" said Somers.

"Ashamed," replied the old lady, "to trespass farther on your goodness than we could help, she insisted on carrying to market such fruit and flowers as we could spare."

"You have acted highly wrong in permitting it," rejoined Somers: "are you aware of the mortification and insult her appearance is likely to create her? Neither her dress or manners is suitable to the occupation she is at present engaged

ed in. I wiſh I had called here ſooner; I think I could have pointed out to her the impropriety of ſuch a ſtep, and prevented her from undertaking it."

"I uſed every entreaty I could," replied the old lady, "and told her you would highly diſapprove of it; but it had no effect: ſhe inſiſted ſhe was only fulfilling the duties of that ſtation in which it had pleaſed God to place her; and while ſhe was conſcious of doing her duty, ſhe had a firm hope that ſhe ſhould meet with his protection."

"It is a point I will not argue upon," ſaid Somers: "I am going to town, and if I am fortunate enough to meet with her, I will prevail upon her to return with me."

He now took his leave of the old lady, and purſued his way towards Briſtol.

"I cannot help expreſſing my ſurpriſe," ſaid Theodore, "at the appearance of the cottage we juſt viſited. There is a neatneſs in it ſo very different from the ſlovenly manner in which ſuch habitations are generally fitted up, that excited my wonder. The embroidery, the drawings, and various pieces of filagree-work, that adorn the room, bear evident teſtimony to the induſtry of its inhabitants; while the guitar and muſic-book that lay on the table beſpeak them beings of a ſuperior order to what I expected to meet with from the external view of the cottage: for although an air of neatneſs is likewiſe viſible there, yet it is not common for perſons poſſeſſing ſuch endowments to content themſelves in ſo humble a dwelling. If it is not too great a liberty," continued Theodore,

dore, " I ſhould be happy if you would ſatisfy my curioſity; for I confeſs it is greatly excited by theſe ſeeming contradictions."

" The young lady you heard me make mention of," replied Somers, " has undergone a ſad reverſe of fortune: her ſtory may be compriſed in a few words; and I will relate it to you as nearly as poſſible to what I was informed by the perſon we ſaw at the cottage.

" Mr. Leſley was a perſon who had deſcended from a good family; but being a younger brother, he poſſeſſed but a ſmall fortune.

" His father deſigned him for the army, and was on the point of obtaining a commiſſion for him, when he accidentally became acquainted with a young lady for

whom he conceived an unconquerable attachment; and, notwithſtanding ſhe had no fortune, and his friends uſed every means to prevent an alliance, yet ſuch was the caſe that he imprudently married under theſe inauſpicious circumſtances.

" The event was, that he gained the diſapprobation of his father, who ſhortly after dying, left him without any means of exiſtence, except a ſmall annuity, which he could not deprive him of.

" Mr. Leſley's elder brother, who inherited the eſtate upon the deceaſe of his father, refuſed him any pecuniary aſſiſtance; but acquainted him, that if he had an inclination to go to the Weſt Indies, he would give him letters of recommendation to a friend who had juſt gone over to take poſſeſſion of ſeveral large

large and valuable plantations, which letters could not fail to forward his intereſt.

" Mr. Leſley, finding no other reſource, was neceſſitated to accept his offer; but, before he was ready to ſail, Mrs. Leſley became pregnant, and he was adviſed to leave her in England till ſhe could follow him with ſafety: for this purpoſe he recommended her to the care of a Mr. and Mrs. Morris, at whoſe houſe he then lodged, leaving her what money he could ſpare, and promiſing to ſend her further remittances if ſhe ſhould find herſelf incapacitated from performing the voyage as ſoon as he expected.

" Mrs. Leſley ſubmitted with reluctance to imperious neceſſity, and parted from her huſband with an aching heart. He had left England about four months when

ſhe was delivered of a daughter; but the unfortunate mother did not ſurvive many days after its birth. Morris paid every attention to the infant, to whom he gave the name of Clariſſa, after its deceaſed parent. He informed Mr. Leſley of his loſs, and received a letter in return, acquainting him that he had ſucceeded in his moſt ſanguine expectations, and that he ſhould regularly remit to him two hundred pounds per annum for the ſupport of his daughter.

" Clariſſa was brought up and educated under the immediate inſpection of Mr. Morris till ſhe was ten years of age; when, Mrs. Morris dying, he thought it prudent to ſelect ſome perſon who, in the character of a governeſs, could ſuperintend her education.

" It was not long before Mrs. Bentley, who

who we have juſt parted from at the cottage, was recommended to his notice.

" She is the relict of an officer, and has nothing to exiſt upon but the widow's penſion.

" Mrs. Bentley had received a liberal education, and was perfectly qualified for the ſituation ſhe was appointed to fill; yet thought it too humiliating an office to accept of in the houſe of another: as ſuch, Mr. Morris conſented to her taking Clariſſa into the country, for which purpoſe a ſmall houſe was provided and furniſhed by him, and the whole annual ſtipend was regularly paid to her for three or four years: at the expiration of the fifth year Mrs. Bentley received a letter from Mr. Morris, acquainting her that no monies had been remitted to him during the laſt twelve months, nor had he receiv-

ed any letter or intelligence whatever from Mr. Leſley; but that he had been informed by private correſpondence, that having laid out the whole of his property in a venture, which was afterwards taken by the enemy, it had ſuch an effect on his health as to bring on a decline, of which he died.

" Mr. Morris further ſtated his incapacity of paying any ſuch ſum as formerly for the young lady's education, but promiſed to ſend thirty pounds per year for her ſupport till ſhe ſhould arrive at a proper age to fill ſome genteel ſituation in life, which he thought, from the education Mrs. Bentley had given her, ſhe would be capable of undertaking with credit to herſelf.

" Mrs. Bentley was not long heſitating on what line of conduct to purſue: ſhe deter-

determined not to part with the young lady, who deſervedly inherited a large ſhare of her eſteem, but immediately, in order to leſſen her expences, removed into an inferior ſituation, diſcharged her ſervants, and with pleaſure performed every domeſtic office that was neceſſary, while her leiſure hours were occupied in Clariſſa's education.

" A twelvemonth had elapſed in her new habitation, and ſhe had received no letter or remittance from Mr. Morris: at length ſhe determined on writing to him; this ſhe repeatedly did, but received no anſwer.

" After a few months, a neighbour who was going to London undertook, at her requeſt, to call on him, and, if poſſible, to aſcertain the cauſe of his ſilence.

" In a few days from that period ſhe

received the unwelcome intelligence that Mr. Morris had abſconded on account of loſſes he had ſuſtained, and that no one knew to what part of the world he had gone.

" Mrs. Bentley was extremely diſconcerted on the receipt of this unpleaſant news. Economical as was her plan of exiſtence, yet it was too expenſive to be continued merely upon her penſion.

" She had a ſmall ſum by her, ſaved out of the money allowed her by Mr. Morris, and with this ſum ſhe purchaſed the cottage and garden where ſhe now reſides, thinking that her income, trifling as it is, could with frugality procure them ſupport: and in all probability they would have found it ſufficient, had not Mrs. Bentley been attacked with a ſevere fit of illneſs, that coſt her a conſiderable ſum,

and

and which has confined her to her houſe for the laſt ſix months.

" Having brought her hiſtory thus far," continued Somers, " I will now relate the circumſtance that introduced me to their acquaintance.

" About three months back, in conſequence of being reduced in their circumſtances, Clariſſa came to a determination of taking in needle-work, and old Betty (my houſekeeper) was applied to, and employed her.

" At the time the articles came home, Betty brought them to me; amongſt various things ſhe had made was a cotton morning gown, and as it required an alteration, I deſired ſhe would introduce the woman, that I might explain it to her. I never was more confounded," continued

Somers, " than when Betty returned conducting in a young lady about ſeventeen.

" I involuntarily roſe from my ſeat and made my obeiſance.

" She curtſied, while her face vied with the damaſk roſe.

" The humility and profound reſpect with which I approached her threw her into evident confuſion.

" ' Look up, young woman,' cried my brute of a houſe-keeper; ' why you ſtand like a fool; my maſter wants to ſhew you his gown.'

" I ſilenced the tongue of my ſervant by ordering her to quit the room; and then addreſſing myſelf to Clariſſa, I took the liberty, ſaid I, to requeſt your attendance concerning a trifling alteration—but it is of no conſequence, I will not trouble you with it.

" The

" The fact is, I was aſhamed to trouble her: nor could I mortify her by aſking how much I ſtood indebted.

" In accents the moſt pleaſing, and in a manner peculiar to herſelf, Clariſſa requeſted to make the required alteration; at the ſame time aſſuring me ſhe ſhould think it no trouble whatever.

" I replied by informing her I would put it on, and if I found the alteration abſolutely neceſſary, I would ſend it to her by my ſervant together with the ſum I ſtood indebted.

" She curtſied, and was leaving the room.

" I beg your pardon, ſaid I, but you have forgot to inform me of your reſidence.

" ' I live with Mrs. Bently,' replied the lovely

lovely girl, ‘ in the white cottage at the foot of yonder hill;’ at the ſame time pointing towards the ſpot.

“ I then attended her to the door through the garden, and ſhe departed.”

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

"THERE was ſomething," continued Somers, "ſo peculiarly intereſting in her appearance, that ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed me in her favour: and my curioſity was greatly excited to know by what means ſo amiable a girl was reduced to the neceſſity of earning a ſcanty ſubſiſtence by her needle.

"I was confident, from her timidity, that ſhe had not long been accuſtomed to ſuch an employment; while her graceful deportment and diſtinguiſhed elegance of figure ſerved to ſtrengthen me in a ſuppoſition I had ventured to form on the firſt moment I beheld her, that ſhe was a perſon who had received a liberal

a liberal education, but had been reduced to neceſſitous circumſtances through misfortunes.

" While I ſtood at my garden gate, ſurveying her as ſhe walked on the bank of the river, I obſerved her ſtrike into a different path than that which led to the ferry, over which it was neceſſary to croſs before ſhe could reach her home.

" The thought occurred to me that I would ſeize that opportunity during her abſence of waiting on Mrs. Bentley, by which means I expected to be ſatisfied reſpecting the particulars as I wiſhed to know them; and likewiſe eſcape the mortification of being neceſſitated to witneſs the humility of the amiable girl while ſhe performed the ſervile taſk of holding out her hand to receive the ſcanty pittance which ſhe was entitled to

for

for the exercise of her menial employment.

" I hastened therefore to the ferry, and having passed the hill, soon discovered Mrs. Bentley's cottage.

" I found the old lady sitting in her elbow-chair. She attempted to rise on my entrance.

" I prevented her, and immediately introduced the conversation respecting the young lady, by enquiring how much I stood indebted; at the same time expressing my surprise that so amiable a character should be necessitated to gain a livelihood by needlework.

" Mrs. Bentley was by no means communicative. She informed me concerning the extent of her demand, and further added, that ' she thought it no disgrace to

to uſe every honeſt endeavour to obtain a livelihood.'

" I agreed with her in this particular, and apologiſed for my preſumption in venturing to trouble her with enquiries, at the ſame time alleging that I had no motive except what might originate from a wiſh to relieve to the utmoſt of my abilities provided there was the leaſt ſhadow of neceſſity.

" Mrs. Bentley was ſtill cautious, and replied, that ' ſhe hoped they ſhould be able to procure a ſufficiency without laying themſelves under an obligation which it was impoſſible they could repay.'

" Finding that ſhe ſtill continued to treat me in this diſtant manner, I roſe from my ſeat, laid down a five-pound note for the work, and was preparing to take

take my leave, but ſhe inſiſted on my ſtaying while ſhe gave me the change; and this ſhe did in ſo poſitive and decided a manner, that I could not refuſe.

" I thought ſhe had too much pride to receive a favour delivered in this manner; but I hoped to have it in my power to relieve her neceſſity by ſome other means. Therefore, having paid her the exact ſum that ſhe charged, I bowed reſpectfully and left her.

" As I was purſuing my way back, ruminating on the folly of coaleſcing pride with poverty, and ſtudying by what means I ſhould be enabled to relieve her, I met the lovely girl on her return.

" She was at that time with difficulty aſcending the hill, having a large bundle of

of linen in her hands, as much as a perſon of moderate ſtrength could carry.

" I haſtened towards her, and inſiſted on diſencumbering her of the load.

" She thanked me with a ſmile that ſpoke more than a thouſand words. I am infinitely obliged to your employer's brutality, ſaid I, in not ſending a ſervant with this parcel, as it has afforded me an opportunity of rendering you this trifling ſervice.

" ' I feel myſelf extremely obliged to you,' rejoined Clariſſa ; ' your kindneſs is conſpicuous, more particularly in this part of the country, where common civility is ſcarcely to be met with: I am ſorry to trouble you ; but am ſo fatigued, I really think I ſhould not be able to reach home with it.'

" How

" How came you, ſaid I, to incommode yourſelf with it?

" ' The doctor,' replied Clariſſa, ' to whom we ſtand indebted a trifle for his attendance, prevailed on me to take it; and as the work was given to diſcharge the bill, I thought it would appear affectation in me, mixed with ingratitude, to refuſe taking what he conſidered me capable of carrying.'

" We converſed," continued Somers, " on various ſubjects, till we reached the cottage; Clariſſa then introduced me to Mrs. Bentley, and mentioned the obligation ſhe was under for the trivial ſervice I had rendered her.

" The old lady thanked me, and ſeemed more communicative than on my former viſit; amongſt other converſation, the cauſe

cauſe of her illneſs, and the medicine preſcribed, occupied a conſiderable ſhare.

" I have no great knowledge of phyſic, yet, from the little experience I have had, I concluded her doctor was making practical experiments at her expence, and therefore ſtrenuouſly ſolicited that ſhe would permit me to ſend one of the gentlemen from the infirmary to which I was a ſubſcriber.

" After a conſiderable altercation on this ſubject, wherein I maintained that my only motive was on account of the ſuperior knowledge he muſt poſſeſs from the extent of his practice, I at length obtained her conſent, and departed for the purpoſe of requeſting his attendance.

" Since that time, I have ſent her wines, and ſuch nouriſhing food as I thought

thought neceſſary for a perſon in her debilitated ſtate; and I ſhould have been happy, if, by the united exertions of the doctor and myſelf, ſhe could have been reſtored to health, but I am fearful that will not be the caſe, as there appears to be an evident decay of nature."

"I cannot help confeſſing," ſaid Theodore, "that I feel myſelf greatly intereſted for the unfortunate Clariſſa: I tremble when I conſider what muſt be her lot if it ſhould pleaſe God to remove Mrs. Bentley; ſhe will then be turned on the wide world without a protector."

"I hope not," rejoined Somers: "I did not conſider that moment loſt which introduced me to her acquaintance; and when the period arrives that ſhe may ſtand in need of a friend, I truſt I ſhall not

not refuſe her any aſſiſtance that is in my power to give."

Theodore poſſeſſed a heart fraught with many valuable ſentiments; he ſeized the hand of Somers, and preſſed it between his, while his eyes beſpoke the full ſatisfaction this aſſurance created. "How few there are to be met with," exclaimed he, "who poſſeſs ſo benevolent a heart!"

"Hold," cried Somers, interrupting him; "it is no more than a common duty we owe to each other, but of which we are too often unmindful.

"The man who is in the full career of pleaſure delights not to fix his eye on ſcenes of miſery and wretchedneſs; Clariſſa would meet with no relief from ſuch a character, unleſs he indulged the vain hope

hope of ſatisfying an improper appetite: but let that man once feel the full force of misfortune, let him be reduced to penury and want; if after that the means of exiſtence return to him, it is more than probable he will have a heart to relieve the ſufferings of another. And thus the adverſity a man ſometimes meets with is, in reality, the greateſt bleſſing his Creator could have ſent him, as it enables him to make a proper uſe of the money he enjoys, and to riot in a pleaſure unknown to any, except thoſe who are in the poſſeſſion of a feeling heart."

By this time they had reached Briſtol: Theodore now parted with his friend, for the purpoſe of purchaſing a few articles he ſtood in need of, and Somers went to the market in purſuit of Clariſſa.

The firſt object that attracted the no-

tice of Somers, after he had parted from Theodore, was a bill paſted upon the front of the poſt-office, to the following purport:

" One hundred pounds reward.

" Eloped from his friends, a young " gentleman, turned of twenty years of " age; about five feet eight inches in " height, remarkably well proportioned; " dark hair and eye-brows; ſharp pierc- " ing black eyes; a mole on his right " cheek: when he left home he was " dreſſed in a brown coat, white waiſt- " coat, buckſkin breeches, and boots.

" Whoever will give information to " Mr. Quibble, attorney-at-law, Thaives " Inn, London, ſo that he may be re- " ſtored to his diſconſolate uncle, ſhall " receive a reward of one hundred " pounds."

Somers,

Somers, on reading this bill, was extremely uneaſy on account of his young friend: he was certain it could be no other than him, as his age, perſon, and dreſs, were ſo particularly deſcribed.

Anxious for his ſafety, he determined to look for him in the various ſhops that dealt in apparel; and with this inten the haſtened from ſtreet to ſtreet, carefully ſurveying every ſhop he came to; in which purſuit I ſhall leave him while I attend to Clariſſa.

CHAP. IV.

CLARISSA had dreſſed herſelf early in the morning in as plain a manner as ſhe could, and as nearly ſuitable to the occupation ſhe was bent upon undertaking.

She left Mrs. Bentley's cottage about nine o'clock, with ſome fruit and flowers in a baſket, which ſhe hung on her arm, and reached the market in about an hour.

Clariſſa was uncommonly handſome, and there was ſomething in her whole appearance ſo totally different from thoſe who were occupied in the ſame employment, that could not fail to attract the general notice.

This was preciſely the caſe, for no ſooner

ſooner had ſhe reached the vicinity of Briſtol than ſhe was neceſſitated to undergo the broad vacant ſtare of the market women, and the fulſome, half-witted compliments of puppyiſh ſhopmen, who ſeldom fail to make a handſome figure the butt of their inſolence, unleſs they are awed into ſilence by the expenſive externals that may decorate the individual.

Clariſſa had not taken her ſtanding in the market but a few minutes before ſhe was accoſted by an elderly lady, who offered to purchaſe the whole ſhe had in her baſket at her own price, provided ſhe would take it to her houſe.

Clariſſa readily aſſented, and followed her.

They had not walked more than one ſtreet from the market-place, before

Clariſſa attracted the notice of a Mr. Freeman, a young gentleman with whom Mr. Somers was acquainted, having frequently met him when amuſing himſelf by fiſhing.

"Well, my pretty maid," ſaid Freeman, "what do you aſk for theſe flowers?"

"I have ſold all I have to that lady," ſaid Clariſſa; (thinking thereby to get rid of any further importunity).

"So your ladyſhip has been catering in the market this morning," ſaid Freeman, addreſſing himſelf to the old lady, and then looking attentively on Clariſſa; "you have, I ſee," he continued, "picked out a choice article."

"Mr. Freeman," ſaid the old lady, "I do not underſtand you, and muſt intreat

intreat you will not interrupt us, as I am in haſte."

"I'll bet a wager," cried Freeman, "here is ſome underhand work: you are dealing in contraband goods, and if you are——but ſtop—I'll ſoon ſet this matter right;" then taking hold of Clariſſa by her arm, and addreſſing himſelf to her, "Do you know who you are with," cried he, "or where you are going?"

Clariſſa was alarmed at the conduct of Freeman, and requeſted he would leave his hold.

By this time, ſeveral people had collected themſelves around them.

"Mr. Freeman, I am aſhamed of you," cried the old lady; "I beg you will deſiſt, the young woman is a perſon I am perfectly acquainted with." Then beckoning for a hackney-coach which

ſtood near her, ſhe requeſted Clariſſa to get in, and ordered the coachman to drive to her houſe.

Freeman declared he would not ſuffer the coach to move till he was ſatisfied.

" Not in the ſtreet, by Jaſus!" cried an Iriſh officer who had witneſſed the preceding ſcene; " you had better go home with the lady abbeſs."

" Indeed, I want none of his company," ſaid the old lady; at the ſame time repeating her requeſt that the coachman would drive on.

" There may be ſome miſtake," cried the Iriſh officer; " give me lave, I will ſpake to the young woman:" then turning to Clariſſa, " Has ſhe offered you a fair price?" ſaid he.

" Indeed, gentlemen," replied Clariſſa,

riſſa, greatly terrified at the appearance of the crowd, " ſhe has agreed to give me all I aſked, and I am perfectly ſatiſfied."

" Oh, by ſaint Patrick," cried the officer, " it is a fair bargain; and let me ſee the man that dares be after attempting to take the old lady's goods out of her hands."

Freeman had no deſire to quarrel with the Hibernian, and therefore (although with evident reluctance) ſuffered the coach to proceed. But he was not ſo perfectly ſatisfied reſpecting it as was the officer, and as ſoon as he had diſengaged himſelf from the crowd he determined on paying a viſit to the old lady, and arrived in the ſtreet juſt time enough to ſee them alight from the coach.

As he was haſtily advancing up to the

houſe he ran againſt Somers, who was at that time in ſearch of Theodore.

"Well met," cried Freeman, "you muſt go with me to the nunnery; I have ſome buſineſs to ſettle with the lady abbeſs."

"I muſt confeſs," rejoined Somers, "I do not underſtand you; nor can I do myſelf the pleaſure of attending you, as I am at this time engaged on an affair of importance."

"Never mind your important affairs," ſaid Freeman; "you muſt and ſhall go with me to Mrs. Gripe's. You have been to yonder nunnery many times no doubt to do ill, you ſhall now go to do good: if I do not miſtake, when I was laſt with you, you were ſtrongly inculcating the practice of virtue; you have now an opportunity of giving a ſpecimen of it."

"What

"What do you mean by the nunnery?" ſaid Somers.

"Oh, your moſt obedient," rejoined Freeman; "but perhaps you may know nothing of it, and being almoſt a ſtranger, living in a manner ſecluded from the world, you may not clearly comprehend me. The inhabitants of Briſtol are not ſo vulgar as in London; they do not ſtigmatiſe certain places with the appellation of houſes of ill-fame, nor do they call the miſtreſs a procureſs, but, wearing more the ſemblance of virtue, they are here called nunneries, and the miſtreſs, the lady abbeſs."

"And wherein," rejoined Somers, "can I give you a ſpecimen of the practice of virtue, by viſiting ſo infamous a place?"

Freeman explained by informing him

of the late incident, and likewiſe drew an animated picture of the perſon who accompanied Mrs. Gripe.

" For Heaven's ſake," cried Somers (greatly alarmed leſt it ſhould be Clariſſa), " let us haſten to the houſe, I ſhall be anxious till I learn the whole of this circumſtance."

They advanced towards the door, and Somers having knocked, was anſwered that Mrs. Gripe was engaged; but Freeman, ſtanding on no ceremony, puſhed paſt the ſervant, deſiring Somers to follow him.

In a moment they were ſurrounded by a quantity of nuns, but as their buſineſs was not devotion, they preſently got rid of them; and after ſearching various rooms arrived at the apartment where Mrs. Gripe and Clariſſa were cloſetted.

Somers

Somers ran and caught her in his arms. "My dear Clariſſa," ſaid he, "how came you to venture yourſelf with a perſon you knew nothing of; you are not aware of the motives that infamous woman had in bringing you here."

"Indeed, Mr. Somers," replied the innocent girl, "you are too haſty in your concluſion; the lady has been very kind, ſhe paid me more than I aſked for the fruit I brought to market, and has offered me an aſylum in her houſe, if I think proper to accept of it."

Freeman was not ſparing in the epithets he beſtowed on the old lady; he talked largely of ſending her to priſon, and having raiſed his voice above the uſual pitch it alarmed the nuns, who came into the room to protect the lady abbeſs.

Neither

Neither Somers or Freeman could ſubmit to have Clariſſa's ears invaded with the converſation made uſe of by theſe deluded victims, and therefore inſiſted on immediately removing her.

While Freeman was ſignifying his intentions to Mrs. Gripe, by declaring he would have the lady, a well-known voice thundered in his ear, "You will! will you? but I think I ſhall ſpoil your ſport."

Freeman looked round, and was ſurpriſed on ſeeing his uncle, Sir Charles Freeman, at whoſe houſe he was on a viſit, and who happened to drive paſt in his carriage at the time he entered the nunnery, and knowing it for what it was he alighted, and reached the apartment as before mentioned.

"And ſo," continued Sir Charles, "you are determined to have a tit of

your

your own. This will be a handſome tale for me to communicate to your father, which you may depend upon I ſhall do: and as to the lady, I will indulge her with a few months' recreation in the county gaol."

Somers undertook to appeaſe Sir Charles, by entering into an explanation of the leading particulars, and concluded by requeſting he would exerciſe his authority as a magiſtrate in taking the young lady from the houſe: but there was no neceſſity for this; Mrs. Gripe finding Clariſſa's party were likely to prove too powerful for her, readily conſented to her accompanying them.

Sir Charles made an ample apology to his nephew for the unworthy ſuſpicion he had harboured, and dwelt largely on the meritorious ſervice he had performed;

in

in doing which, he was neceſſitated to glance at the wretched lot he had in all probability preſerved her from: and then ſurveying the unfortunate characters around him with an eye of pity and concern, he adviſed them to return to their friends, and forſake ſo vicious a courſe of life, which could end in nothing but certain miſery. But to Mrs. Gripe he was far more ſevere; he painted to her in the moſt glowing colours the infamy of her conduct, and concluded by threatening her with a proſecution.

Clariſſa was now no longer blind to the ſituation in which ſhe had been nearly plunged.

She fled from the ſide of Mrs. Gripe, and taking Mr. Freeman and Somers by their hands, called them her protectors; while the tear that was forced into her

her eye from the fulneſs of her heart ornamented the effuſions of gratitude ſhe ſent up to the throne of her Creator.

Sir Charles offered the uſe of his carriage to convey Clariſſa to her friend, which offer was thankfully accepted, and Mrs. Gripe got rid of her unwelcome viſitors.

Mrs. Bentley's cottage ſtood at ſome diſtance from the high road; Sir Charles was therefore neceſſitated to part from her before ſhe reached home. Somers and Clariſſa alighted for the purpoſe of walking acroſs the fields, and Freeman requeſted permiſſion to make one of the party.

They ſhortly arrived at the cottage, and Somers had once more the pleaſure of ſeeing Clariſſa under the protection of

Mrs.

Mrs. Bentley, after which he took his leave, and accompanied by Freeman purſued his way to his own houſe.

When he arrived he enquired if Theodore had returned.

The ſervant replied in the negative, but informed him that a man had brought a letter from him which ſhe had laid in his library.

Thither he immediately repaired, and having broke the ſeal had the mortification to read the following lines:

" DEAR COUSIN,

" In conſequence of a bill poſted up in Briſtol deſcribing a perſon (whoſe reſemblance I am ſuppoſed to bear) as having eloped from his friends, and offering a reward of one hundred pounds for his apprehenſion, I am at this time in the cuſtody of

of two countrymen at Sir Charles Freeman's.

" They conveyed me to this houſe that they might have the ſanction of a magiſtrate for their proceedings.

" I repreſented to them that I was a relation of yours, and that you were capable of ſatisfying them of their error reſpecting me.

" Sir Charles is from home; as ſuch I have not yet been neceſſitated to anſwer any interrogatories.

" I need not add that your attendance here is indiſpenſably neceſſary for the future happineſs of,

" Your ſincere friend and couſin,

" THEODORE SOMERS."

Something was neceſſary immediately to be done. Theodore had by this letter marked out a method for him to purſue.

He

He ſhewed it to Freeman, and after conſulting reſpecting the moſt eligible method of reſcuing him from the countrymen, they ſet off together for Sir Charles's.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

WHEN Theodore parted from his friend Somers in Briſtol, he haſtened to furniſh himſelf with ſuch neceſſaries as he required, and for this purpoſe repaired to ſeveral ſhops.

During the time he was being ſerved at a Hoſier's, a man with a parcel of hand-bills entered, and after throwing one on the counter, left the place.

Theodore read the contents, in which his perſon and dreſs were minutely deſcribed.

The tradeſman was too buſy in endeavouring to enhance the value of his goods to attend to the countenance of Theodore, which bore evident marks of confuſion;

ſion; he admitted every thing he ſaid, gave him what he aſked, and while he was employed in receiving the money, had the addreſs to ſlip the hand-bill into his pocket.

He determined to purchaſe no other articles on that day, but to get out of the city as ſoon as poſſible.

For this purpoſe, after leaving the ſhop, he ran through ſeveral ſtreets till he reached the fields, without ever obſerving that he was purſued; at length he was overtaken by two countrymen.

"Where be'eſt gooing," ſaid one of them, "that thee runs ſo vaſt?"

Theodore ſtopt and endeavoured to compoſe his countenance.

"Thee muſt goo wi' me to thig houſ-en on the hill," reſumed the countryman; "Zur

"Zur Charles muſt ha' ſome talk wi thee."

"I really do not comprehend you," ſaid Theodore; "I deſire you will leave me, and attend to your own concerns."

"What," cried the other countryman, "I zuppoſe thee doſ'ent knaw Muſter Cribble the lawyer of Thieves Inn; but Zur Charles wull make thee knaw un whether thee wull or not, zoo come along Iſe tell thee."

Theodore found all reſiſtance would be uſeleſs, and therefore ſuffered himſelf to be conducted towards Sir Charles Freeman's

When he arrived within a quarter of a mile of the houſe, the men deſired him to ſtop while they withdrew to a ſmall diſtance to have ſome converſation together.

"Look'e,

"Look'e, vrend Tummas," ſaid one to the other; "thig hundred poonds wad be a main great thing vor us if we could get un; but Iſe donna like thig ſame lawyer, nor thig name of Thieves Inn; thee knaweſt all the lawyers be great rogues, and we ſhall only have our pains vor our trouble; now if ſo be as how the young man wull ge' us any thing, wull thee take the money and let un goo?"

"Why, Ned," replied the other, "what thee ſaiſt may be right and may be not, zo if the young man wull ge' us vorty or vifty poonds why we wull e'en let un off."

Theſe preliminaries being adjuſted, they made Theodore acquainted with the reſult of their wiſe cogitations, but he was too much on his guard, to ſuffer them from

from any offer of his, to ſuſpect that he was the real party, nor had he any ſuch ſum about him.

He contented himſelf by obſerving, that he was a relation of Mr. Somers, who would not fail to puniſh them for their conduct.

"I do knaw Muſter Zummers very wull," ſaid one of the men, "and thee knaweſt nothing about un, or thee woos'ent talk about his puniſhing us; God bleſs un, he woos'ent puniſh a worm; he would more likely pay us vor taking thee to thy vrends who is breaking their hearts vor thee."

"Your goodneſs is conſpicuous," replied Theodore, "and highly deſerving of a reward, ſince you would ſacrifice the feelings of thoſe friends, for forty or fifty pounds."

" Now," cried one of them, " vor that ſpeech, God rat un, thou ſhalſt goo wuther thee would or not; zoo come along."

Theodore having arrived at Sir Charles's, was confined in an apartment under a guard of one of his ſervants till he ſhould return home. To this ſervant he delivered a requeſt that he might be indulged with pen, ink, and paper, and that he would forward a letter to Mr. Somers, which requeſt was complied with.

No ſooner had the men delivered Theodore to the care of the ſervant than they adjourned to the kitchen, and taking out the hand-bill explained to Richard, Timothy, Ralph, Humphry, Jenny, Peggy, Molly, Dolly, &c. &c. the whole of this myſterious affair, which naturally excited the curioſity of theſe votaries to the bruſh

and

and diſhclout; and not one of them was there who did not make an errand to the apartment for ſome trivial matter, in order to gain a ſight of Theodore, whoſe intereſting figure, and manly deportment, could not fail of exciting their admiration.

Every female tongue was occupied in his praiſe: "What a charming young man!" ſaid one: "Bleſs me," ſaid another, "how unhappy muſt his friends be on his account; I would give my laſt new gown to know what made him elope."

While each were engaged in developing this myſtery, Ellen, the ſervant of Auguſta Freeman, made her appearance.

"Have you ſeen him?" was re-echoed from every corner of the room.

Ellen had been attending on her young

lady, and had not heard of Theodore, but her curioſity was now greatly excited by the relation of the ſervants; ſhe immediately recollected that ſhe had ſomething to ſay to John who was placed in the room as a guard, and therefore haſtened to the apartment.

Theodore's mind was at that time fully occupied with his perilous ſituation, which forced a tear into his eye that was viſible on her approach.

This tear prepoſſeſſed Ellen in his favour more than his external appearance otherwiſe would have done; and obſerving him to be rather pale, ſhe requeſted him to take ſome refreſhment, to which requeſt he readily aſſented.

Ellen deſired John to conduct the young gentleman into the parlour, and after preſenting

ſenting him with a glaſs of wine and a biſcuit, left the room.

Theodore diſcovered a piano-forte, and having ſeated himſelf, endeavoured to compoſe his ſpirits by playing a few of his favourite airs.

Auguſta, the only daughter of Sir Charles Freeman, was at that time walking in the pleaſure-ground, and within hearing.

She was attracted by the maſterly ſtyle with which ſhe heard ſome perſon perform on the inſtrument, and haſtened to the parlour to be ſatisfied reſpecting who it was.

The door was not ſhut, and Theodore's attention being occupied he did not obſerve the approach of Auguſta till he had finiſhed a favourite piece, and was looking over the notes for another; but he

no ſooner caſt his eyes towards her than he aroſe from his ſeat and made his obeiſance.

Auguſta returned it; and looking towards the ſervant, he informed her the gentleman was waiting to ſee Sir Charles.

Auguſta requeſted Theodore would reſume his ſeat; then taking a letter from her pocket ordered the ſervant to convey it as directed.

The ſervant heſitated; and at length informed her that he was deſired to ſtay with the young gentleman till Sir Charles returned.

It ſo happened that but a few days back a perſon was introduced into this ſame apartment who alleged he had buſineſs with Sir Charles, and before the expiration of the day an article of plate was miſſing. Sir Charles therefore deſired

ed that no ſtranger might be left alone for the future, provided any valuables were laying about. And when Theodore heard the ſervant mention that he was deſired to attend, a bluſh overſpread his countenance from a recollection of his own ſituation, and feeling mortified at the neceſſity there appeared to be of acquainting Auguſta with it; while ſhe, on the other hand, interpreted the bluſh and evident confuſion of Theodore to the apparent ſuſpicion betrayed by the ſervant, and, therefore, in a manner that would admit of no denial, ordered him to convey the letter.

The ſervant bowed and retired.

Auguſta and Theodore being left alone, ſhe endeavoured to do away the unpleaſant idea which ſhe concluded he muſt have received from the expreſſion of the

ſervant, by treating him with the utmoſt reſpect and attention.

Theodore ſtill remained ſtanding.

Auguſta again requeſted him to reſume his ſeat, and to indulge her by playing a favourite overture.

He complied; but from the agitation and hurry of his ſpirits, made ſeveral errors, for which he apologiſed.

Auguſta Freeman had ſcarcely attained her nineteenth year; ſhe was a moſt enchanting figure, and had a manner with her ſo peculiarly bewitching that could not fail to faſcinate the eye of the beholder.

Theodore was at an age capable of receiving a ſoft impreſſion in its full force.

At the time he was playing Auguſta was ſitting at the end of the piano, viewing, with admiration, the maſterly manner with

with which he touched the keys; and perhaps her admiration was not a little heightened by his external accompliſhments.

Whatever might have been her feelings at that period, nothing could have exceeded thoſe of Theodore's.

He ſtrove to touch the keys to perfection, but Auguſta ſo fully occupied his thoughts that errors were unavoidable.

A ſecret ſenſation thrilled through his heart that he was at a loſs to account for, but which naturally inclined him to play a pleaſing air more ſuitable to his feelings than the former.

This ſo far led him beyond himſelf, that he caſt an expreſſive look on Auguſta which ſpoke a volume.

She aroſe from her ſeat, and was endeavouring to hide the perturbation it

had created, when ſhe was relieved by the entrance of her father. She took this opportunity, after thanking Theodore for his kindneſs, to quit the room.

Theodore aroſe on the entrance of Sir Charles, and having endeavoured to collect himſelf, he determined to carry off the affair which had brought him there with an air of pleaſantry; and therefore aſſuming a ſmile, "I am brought here," ſaid he, "upon a very ridiculous buſineſs; a hand-bill has this day been circulated in Briſtol offering a reward for the apprehenſion of a young man who has eloped from his friends, and becauſe the deſcription therein given in a great meaſure reſembles me, I have been conveyed to this houſe that you may have an opportunity of aſcertaining the fact; but I hope when I inform you that I am a

relation

relation to Mr. Somers, and reſide with him, you will be ſatisfied I am not the perſon taken for."

During the time Theodore was explaining the buſineſs that brought him there, Sir Charles was peruſing a bill to the ſame purport, which had been put into his hands at Briſtol; and after viewing him with ſcrupulous attention—"I do not heſitate," ſaid he, "in believing you to be the identical perſon: as to a relationſhip between Mr. Somers and yourſelf, I am greatly inclined to doubt it, for from what I know of him he is the moſt likely perſon in the world to ſcreen you from the knowledge of your friends under the title of a relation, provided he thought he was doing a charitable tranſaction, and rendering an eſſential ſervice to an individual.

" The other day he made intereſt and got a man liberated who was confined for ſtealing a ſheep, pleading as an excuſe for the man, that he had a large family, and that as he conſumed it amongſt them, it was clearly evident hunger prompted him to commit the theft.

" I do not mean to wound your feelings by bringing a compariſon between that man's crime and the charge alleged againſt you;—far from it; there is no degree of criminality attaches to you;—I mention it only to ſhew how wrong Somers can act when prompted by benevolent motives: it is clearly evident he loſt ſight of juſtice.

" However, Mr. Somers muſt excuſe me, as I ſhall certainly requeſt him to anſwer me a few queſtions concerning the relationſhip between you before I ſhall diſcredit

diſcredit the evidence of my own ſenſes; for if ever a perſon was fully deſcribed, yours is moſt particularly ſo, in this bill."

Theodore now appeared greatly confuſed.

"You will meet with far more lenity," continued Sir Charles, "if you will make a candid avowal of who you are; I will then undertake to reconcile you to your friends, and prevent your being further expoſed."

A ſervant now entered, and informed Sir Charles the two countrymen who had brought in Theodore wiſhed to know how they were to proceed.

Sir Charles left the room for the purpoſe of ſpeaking with them.

Auguſta had been informed by Ellen of the unfortunate ſituation of Theodore, and was haſtening to her father, leſt her interceſſion

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terceſſion for his releaſe ſhould be neceſſary, when ſhe met him at the door after he had left the parlour, and requeſted he would not give the informers (as ſhe ſtyled them) any hope of his being the perſon, till ſuch time as he had thoroughly inveſtigated the cauſe that made him leave his home.

Sir Charles pauſed. "I will take your advice, Auguſta," ſaid he; "this may be a delicate buſineſs, Mr. Somers ſhall be ſent for before I decide on any thing; in the mean time, I will have ſome further converſation with him."

Theodore had taken the advantage of Sir Charles's abſence to ruminate on what method he ſhould purſue.

He had ſent a letter to his friend Somers ſignifying he had paſſed for his relation, nor could he now think of con-

confeſſing to the contrary, leſt Somers ſhould aſſert the ſame, and be detected in the falſity.

In this perplexing dilemma he drew the caſe from his pocket that contained the miniatures, and ſurveyed them attentively, while he heaved a ſigh, and found relief in a tear.

Sir Charles and Auguſta were ſpectators of this ſilent ſcene, having, although without deſign, entered the room unperceived.

Sir Charles diſcovering ſomething in Theodore's hand which attracted his attention, thought it might probably throw ſome light on the buſineſs, and therefore requeſted he might know what it was.

Theodore turned round on hearing Sir Charles's voice, and as he was in the act

of

of ſhutting up the caſe, one of the miniatures fell from it.

" A lady, I perceive!" cried Sir Charles, as Theodore was ſtooping for it.

" We ſeldom hear of an elopement without it is accompanied by a love ſcene: but I cannot conceive what could induce you to poſſeſs yourſelf of the portrait of a lady at ſo early a period: come, ſir," continued he, " let me ſee this paragon of beauty, that has been the cauſe of your exiling yourſelf."

" Sir Charles," replied Theodore (rather warm), " what you beheld was undoubtedly the reſemblance of a lady; but you will particularly oblige me in not making either her or me the ſubject of your ridicule."

" I find how it is," rejoined Sir Charles;

" you

" you really fancy yourſelf in love ; and, I ſuppoſe, like Don Quixotte, would attack the firſt wind-mill that might preſent itſelf in oppoſition to you."

Auguſta was extremely uneaſy, leſt her father ſhould provoke Theodore ſo far as to make him utter what he could not recal: at the ſame time ſhe was anxious, although ſhe knew not why, to obtain a ſight of the miniature in queſtion. But Theodore was prevented from replying by the entrance of a ſervant, who announced the arrival of Somers and Freeman.

Sir Charles requeſted their attendance.

As ſoon as Freeman entered the room he ran up to Theodore, and taking his hand, " My dear old friend," ſaid he, " you

" you cannot imagine how diſappointed we were, in not meeting you at home."

" Old friend," repeated Sir Charles, ſomewhat ſarcaſtically; " come, come, Ned, that will not do with me: I will bet you a wager you never ſaw this young gentleman before."

" Indeed, my dear uncle," replied Freeman, " you cannot but recollect how often I have dwelt on the merits of Theodore Somers."

" I deſire you will ſay no more, Ned," cried Sir Charles, " I am not to be bantered out of my judgment; and am confident Mr. Somers has too great a reſpect for truth to inſiſt upon this perſon being either a relation of his, or an old acquaintrnce of yours."

" I ſhall

"I ſhall refer you to him," rejoined Freeman; "and ſince I have had ſuch ill ſucceſs here, I will try what I can meet with elſewhere."

He then left the room, before his uncle had time to aſk him his meaning.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

SOMERS found it would be impoſſible to impoſe on Sir Charles, and therefore reſolved to aſk for the diſcharge of Theodore as a favour. He informed him that Theodore had put himſelf under his protection, and that he would particularly oblige him by not interfering in this buſineſs.

"However I might be inclined," replied Sir Charles, "to oblige you as a private gentleman, I have it not in my power to do it as a magiſtrate; nor am I quite clear whether you have not been impoſed upon; for, if I do not miſtake, it is a love affair: and I will leave you to judge, if he is at a proper age to diſtinguiſh for himſelf in ſuch a particular."

"It

" It is the firſt word I have heard of it," rejoined Somers; " nor can I credit it."

Sir Charles repeated to Somers the affair of the miniature, and, as a proof of his aſſertion, requeſted he might ſee it.

Theodore complied, by putting the caſe into his hands.

Sir Charles opened it, and diſcovered two miniatures; the one of a lady, the other of a gentleman.

" To ſhew," ſaid Theodore, " how wrong Sir Charles was in his conjecture, it is neceſſary I ſhould inform him they are the miniatures of my parents; to which I conſider myſelf entitled, as they were left to remind me of thoſe dear relatives: I therefore poſſeſſed myſelf of them before I left home, and ſhall take ſpecial care to preſerve them."

" Have

"Have you had the misfortune to loſe theſe relatives?" ſaid Sir Charles.

"Heaven forbid!" replied Theodore; "they are at preſent in exiſtence, although ſeparated from me by an immenſe ocean: yet I truſt I ſhall one day ſee them.

"The perſon in whoſe charge I was left when an infant, has abuſed his truſt; and you, Sir Charles, under the idea of doing an act of juſtice, are only endeavouring to aſſiſt one of the worſt of men.

"As a proof of the truth of this aſſertion," continued he, "take out the miniatures, and under them you will find a letter which will further inform you."

Sir Charles did as Theodore had requeſted.

The letter was without either direction

or

or ſignature, and contained the following words:

'DEAR FRIEND,

'On the receipt of this haſten from 'home to where you can remain con- 'cealed. I am now poſitive that an art- 'ful deſign is laid to convey you out of 'the kingdom, which I ſhall not have 'the power to prevent, as I am not the 'party ſelected to put it into execution: 'heſitate therefore not a moment; but 'take the firſt opportunity of letting me 'know to what part of the world you 'go, and I will anſwer any pecuniary 'demand you may make on me, and be 'happy to aſſiſt you with ſuch advice as 'may hereafter be of ſervice to you and 'your family. I have no occaſion to ſign 'my name, ſince you muſt recollect the

'party

'party who firſt informed you of this 'unpleaſant buſineſs, to which party you 'muſt attribute theſe lines.'

After having read this letter, Sir Charles declared himſelf at a loſs how to proceed.

"I am of opinion," ſaid he, "that I ſhould act wrong in delivering the young man to his uncle till this unpleaſant buſineſs is cleared up; but how am I to get rid of the countrymen who took him? they will not think of parting with him without the reward ſpecified in the bill."

"I will undertake to ſettle the buſineſs," ſaid Somers, "by paying the money."

Theodore teſtified his gratitude, and aſſured him the time would come that he

he ſhould have it in his power to make an ample compenſation for his generoſity.

During this converſation Freeman returned to the room. "I have relieved you," ſaid he, "from the neceſſity of ſo doing, by taking the trouble off your hands.

"The men were not ſo unbelieving as Sir Charles: I declared to them, that Theodore was an intimate acquaintance of mine, and a near relation of yours; and, in return, I received a thouſand apologies from them."

"You ſhould have given the men ſomething for their trouble," ſaid Somers; "as they were certainly doing no more than their duty."

"They are a couple of ſcoundrels," rejoined Theodore; "for they offered to

liberate me if I would give them forty or fifty pounds."

"If that be the caſe," reſumed Sir Charles, "they are rightly ſerved. And now we have diſpoſed of this unpleaſant buſineſs, if you are not engaged (addreſſing himſelf to Somers), I ſhall be happy in the company of yourſelf and young friend to dinner."

Somers and Theodore accepted the invitation.

Auguſta now approached Theodore, and congratulated him on his eſcape; adding, "that ſhe ſhould have felt herſelf extremely diſappointed, had any thing happened to prevent her from receiving a few leſſons on the piano, as he performed in ſo maſterly a ſtyle, and infinitely ſuperior to what ſhe had ever heard."

Theodore

Theodore thanked her for the compliment (as he called it), and declared "he ſhould feel himſelf highly honoured in being permitted to render her any aſſiſtance, provided it lay in his power."

As ſoon as they had dined, Freeman, who thought Auguſta might careleſsly mention what had paſt concerning Theodore, and as ſuch put it in the power of any individual to inform againſt him, requeſted her company a few minutes in the garden.

When they had left the room, Sir Charles deſired Somers to fill his glaſs. "Come," ſaid he, "I will give you the young couple that has juſt left us—Edward and Auguſta Freeman."

"With pleaſure," replied Somers; "an amiable pair."

"Yes, Mr. Somers," resumed Sir Charles; "they have been designed for each other from their infancy.

"My brother has no child but Ned, and I have none but Augusta.

"It would be an unpleasant circumstance if my estate were to go from my own child; but, as it is, she will inherit it at my decease by virtue of her marriage with my nephew, as it passes to the male heir, which title rests in him."

"I sincerely hope," said Somers, "that nothing will intervene to prevent so desirable a purpose; for I presume, much as you wish to bring this matter to bear, you would not desire it unless both parties were perfectly agreeable, and confident that their own happiness depended on such an union."

"I will

" I will not admit of ſuch an idea for a moment," replied Sir Charles; " becauſe I am determined it ſhall not make me unhappy.

" Freeman is as handſome a young man as it is poſſible to meet with, and my girl is not wanting of accompliſhments; therefore I do not know how they ſhould avoid being attached to each other: and yet, I muſt confeſs, there does not appear to be that refined attachment between them that I could wiſh; they treat each other more like brother and ſiſter, and their affection ſeems to have that ſource for its origin. I have often thought," continued Sir Charles, " I acted wrong in acquainting them with my deſign, till ſuch time as I had been poſitive their inclinations perfectly accorded with it."

" Human nature will always reſiſt compulſion," rejoined Somers. " It is very probable, had Mr. Freeman and your daughter been left to the free and unbiaſſed exerciſe of their own inclinations, you would have had your end accompliſhed; whereas, on the contrary, they will reſiſt what appears to be forced, and naturally repine for what is forbidden. Such, at leaſt, is the general remark I have been able to make from different characters I have hitherto been acquainted with."

" Whatever they may be inclined to do," reſumed Sir Charles, " they will ſcarcely, I think, venture to reſiſt the poſitive commands of my brother and myſelf; for whether they approve or diſapprove, it certainly ſhall be brought about;

about; therefore I make myſelf perfectly eaſy on that head."

"What," cried Somers, "without having formed an attachment?"

"I ſhall truſt to that taking place hereafter," replied Sir Charles. "Marriage naturally habituates the one to the other, and affection is almoſt ſure to follow where the diſpoſitions of both parties are amiable, as is the caſe in the preſent inſtance."

Somers ſhook his head.—"I hope, Sir Charles," ſaid he, "whatever may be the event, you will uſe your endeavours to interrupt, inſtead of forwarding, an union, unleſs you are confident it perfectly accords with their wiſhes; for, without that, it muſt occaſion unparalleled miſery."

Theodore lent an attentive ear to this converſation: he was happy to find that Auguſta had betrayed no ſymptoms of a real affection for Freeman, and yet he knew not why he felt this ſenſation.

He looked on Mr. Somers and Sir Charles alternately; conceived one to be an ornament to his ſpecies, and the other void of every tender ſentiment that could dignify a human being: he felt a ſtrong inclination to deliver his ſentiments on this ſubject, and ſeveral times attempted to ſpeak; but checked himſelf, fearing leſt his words might convey an offence.

Sir Charles obſerved this inclination on the part of Theodore, and being deſirous to hear what he could advance on the ſubject, condeſcended to requeſt his opinion, by aſking him, how he ſhould conduct

duct himſelf if he were placed in the ſituation of Freeman.

" I ſhould conceive it impoſſible," replied Theodore, " but that your nephew muſt have an exalted affection for Auguſta; for who can ſee her and not feel the force of ſuch united accompliſhments?

" If he poſſeſs that affection in its fulleſt extent, he will not ſuffer any power whatever to unite him to her, unleſs he is confident ſhe poſſeſſes the ſame ſentiment towards him. On the other hand, if Miſs Freeman poſſeſſed the moſt lively affection for your nephew, and was confident that affection was not returned, ſhe would be highly culpable, although awed by the commands of a parent, in ſuffering herſelf to be allied to him.

" But if neither party have an affec-

tion, it would be monſtrous even to think of uniting them, and thoſe that inſiſt on it are loſt to—— But I beg your pardon; it is not my meaning to give offence, and therefore I ſhall not enlarge upon the ſubject."

"I requeſt you will proceed," cried Sir Charles, "as I am impatient till I hear your opinion fully."

"I never knew," reſumed Theodore, "what it was to experience the careſſes of a parent, having been left by them in an infant ſtate; but ſo exalted is my idea of paternal regard, that I ſhould conceive they would be the laſt perſons in the world who could be ſo far loſt to all ſenſe of feeling as to ſacrifice the happineſs of their own child.

"I know not what opinion I ſhould have of my father, if he were to inſiſt upon

upon my ſwearing at the altar to love a perſon during my life, when, at the ſame time, I did not feel one ſpark of affection for her.

" I ſhould think I did not commit an error by diſobeying his will in this particular; as, by complying with it, I ſhould be guilty of an act of injuſtice to her I might marry, convert into mockery one of the moſt ſacred inſtitutions, and as ſuch draw upon myſelf the vengeance of my Creator."

" You take up this buſineſs in a wrong light," reſumed Sir Charles; " let me aſk, if you would not draw upon yourſelf the vengeance of your Creator by marrying in direct oppoſition to the will of your father?"

" If I were to do ſo now," replied Theodore, " I ſhould think I acted impru-

dently, becauſe it is preſumed I am not arrived at years of maturity, and as ſuch incapable of judging for myſelf: but the caſe would be materially different had I arrived at manhood. At that period I ſhould be capable of managing my own eſtate—of delivering my ſentiments in the ſenate; I ſhould then be conſidered capable of diſtinguiſhing: and am I, then, to give up my judgment or inclination to the will of my father in an affair which ſo materially concerns my future happineſs?

" One man takes a delight in hunting, another in ſhooting; another is an epicure, another delights in play, and another takes no happineſs but in wine:—while I object to them all, and am never ſo happy as when I am reading. If my father were to inſiſt on my practiſing for the

the reſidue of my days any of the before-mentioned pleaſures, I ſhould conceive it a ſevere penance, and ſhould not be able to oblige him. How then would it be poſſible that I could be happy with a perſon of his choice, provided ſhe was not equally ſo of mine? Indeed, I ſhould have no dread whatever of bringing upon myſelf the vengeance of Heaven by marrying the perſon my heart approved; confident that when he required me to act otherwiſe, he wiſhed to exact an act of duty from me that I was not bound to pay, and which both religion and human policy would compel me to reſiſt.

" But if by complying with the commands of a parent a ſon ſhould be rendered unhappy, how truly miſerable muſt a daughter be when placed in a ſimilar ſituation!—Men may range at large without

out being conſidered obnoxious to ſociety: when home is diſagreeable they may engage in a thouſand pleaſures to divert the mind; and can abſent themſelves for months, without any one daring to call their conduct in queſtion. But ſuch is not the caſe with a wife: ſhe is under the abſolute control of the huſband—a control which muſt be intolerable when ſhe diſlikes her partner. She is obliged to live a life of perpetual deception; to receive his careſſes with an air of tenderneſs; and, if ſhe deviate from virtue, ſhe is immediately execrated by ſociety. In fact, I have made up my mind to it, that in an affair of ſo much importance, no one is ſo capable of judging what is neceſſary for their future happineſs as the party concerned."

"From the whole of this converſation," reſumed

reſumed Sir Charles, " you would give me to underſtand, that if my daughter fixed her attachment on a Tinker I ought not to oppoſe her inclination, but, on the contrary, to uſe my endeavours in forwarding it, ſeeing it would be conducive to her future happineſs."

" That is a circumſtance," rejoined Theodore, " which I ſhould conceive impoſſible to take place; there never could be an union of ſouls between two ſuch oppoſites; ſuch a character would be more likely to create diſguſt than affection."

" And yet," reſumed Sir Charles, " circumſtances of that nature almoſt as monſtrous frequently happen."

" I will admit it," rejoined Theodore; " but it ſeldom is the caſe when the lady has arrived at a proper age, and capable of

of diſtinguiſhing: till that period therefore it becomes the parent to prevent the child from making any improper engagements; but it does not follow that ſhe ſhould be forced into a marriage with a perſon whom her heart cannot acknowledge."

"Upon the whole," ſaid Sir Charles, "your argument is very well in theory, but could not with propriety be brought into practice."

"What argument is that?" ſaid Freeman, as he entered the room leading in Auguſta.

"Theodore," ſaid Sir Charles, "has been inſiſting on the doctrine of free-will reſpecting marriage, by totally excluding the right of the parent to interfere."

"I am of his opinion," ſaid Freeman, "where a perſon marries a ſtranger; but the

the caſe differs where we are required to marry a relation; a firſt couſin for inſtance: it would be hard indeed, if we could not oblige our friends in ſuch a trivial caſe, as the marriage could ſcarcely make us more related than we were before."

This expreſſion was delivered with a degree of ſarcaſm that brought the colour into Sir Charles's face, and Auguſta, who was fearful leſt it ſhould occaſion an unpleaſant remark, gave a turn to the converſation, by requeſting Theodore to oblige her with a leſſon at the piano.

Theodore complied.

Sir Charles was delighted with his playing, and requeſted Somers would permit his young friend to viſit him frequently, that Auguſta might derive a benefit from his abilities.

"Certainly,"

"Certainly," replied Somers; "and I have no doubt but he will be happy to attend."

Theodore bowed an aſſent, while the pleaſure that beamed from his eye bore evident teſtimony of the ſatisfaction he received from the invitation.

Auguſta was far from appearing diſpleaſed; ſhe joined her requeſt to that of her father, and promiſed, in return, to exerciſe her aſſiduity to the utmoſt that ſhe might do credit to his inſtructions.

"I preſume," ſaid Sir Charles, addreſſing himſelf to Somers, "it would be idle in me to requeſt your company, as I am informed you ſhun ſociety as much as poſſible, and take no delight but in ſolitude."

"We muſt endeavour to diſpel this gloom

gloom," rejoined Freeman, " or he will ſhortly become a hermit."

" Before he ſhall be loſt to the world," reſumed Sir Charles, " we will viſit him every day; what ſay you, Ned?—Auguſta, will you join with us?"

Somers thanked them for their kind intentions, and took his leave, after aſſuring them he ſhould be proud in the honour of their company.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

AS they drew near to Cliffdown Lodge, Theodore took occaſion to obſerve that Somers appeared unuſually melancholy.

" It proceeds," replied Somers, " from a variety of cauſes; ſome of which I cannot make you a partaker in: I confeſs it gives me uneaſineſs when I conſider that my plan of life is to be infringed upon. I cannot be happy in the company of Freeman; I believe him to be a worthy character, but he is too lively: his gaiety of diſpoſition will but ill ſuit with the melancholy turn of mind that I am in."

" Are you not aware," ſaid Theodore, " how wrong it is to indulge this melancholy,

choly, which unleſs conquered will embitter, if not ſhorten, the reſidue of your days?"

"I know my error," reſumed Somers, "but Freeman is not the character who could rouſe my ſoul from the ſtupor that poſſeſſes it; he would touch my ſorrows with too rough a hand."

"You complimented me," ſaid Theodore, "by ſaying you were happy I poſſeſſed a mind congenial to your own; if you really think ſo, why will you not make me acquainted with the origin of this melancholy? if my attempts to alleviate it ſhould fail, ſtill it will have one good effect, as it would prevent me from touching upon that theme which wounds you moſt, but which otherwiſe I may be guilty of through ignorance."

"It

"It is impoſſible," replied Somers, "that you can feel for me as you would do had you been in a ſimilar ſituation with myſelf; you have never yet been either a huſband or a parent—I am, unhappily, both.

"I have this day aſſumed a gaiety foreign to my feelings.

"When I obſerved with how much pleaſure your eyes were fixt on the lovely form of Auguſta; how you devoured her words; how you watched every motion, and each breath ſhe drew; I could not help recalling to my mind, that ſuch was once the caſe with me; and perhaps, like you, I fondly hoped my happineſs would never have an end."

"Is it poſſible," ſaid Theodore, "you could diſtinguiſh any thing particular in my

my conduct towards Auguſta Freeman? if ſo, I am fearful Sir Charles muſt have noticed it."

"You have not yet," replied Somers, "learnt to diſguiſe your own feelings: as ſuch, aſk your heart what are its ſentiments reſpecting Auguſta; then judge whether I have been able to diſtinguiſh. Sir Charles I am confident did not notice it: he is like the over-cautious mariner, who is for ever looking forward through his teleſcope to diſcover an enemy at a diſtance, and ſees not his foe that has approached from a different quarter."

"I feel," reſumed Theodore, "that you have formed a right judgment reſpecting my ſentiments towards Auguſta.

"I have frequently been introduced into the ſociety of ſome of the moſt enchanting

chanting women; yet never, till this day, did I feel ſo ſtrong a deſire to pleaſe.

" I attempted to recommend myſelf by playing with greater ſkill and judgment than I am accuſtomed to do, yet never was I ſo diſſatisfied with my performance.

" Nothing could have exceeded the mortification I endured when I ſaw the neceſſity there would be of her becoming acquainted with the unpleaſant buſineſs for which I was conducted there; and I will venture to aſſert, that the fear I had leſt I ſhould be removed to where I could not ſee her, was equal to the dread I felt leſt I ſhould be ſent back from whence I came.

" I cannot help adding, that it gives me pleaſure when I reflect on the doubts entertained by Sir Charles on the projected union, which doubts were conſiderably

ſtrengthened

ſtrengthened by their conduct towards each other; but were I to attempt to deſcribe the ſatisfaction I felt on receiving a general invitation to the houſe, for the expreſs purpoſe of inſtructing the amiable Auguſta, my words would fall far ſhort of the ſenſations it created."

"It ſeems then, Theodore," reſumed Somers, "that I was right in my conjecture: yet permit me to ſay a few words by way of caution. You have already embarked in a very hazardous undertaking; it becomes you to check this growing paſſion, till you are certain you can have it fully returned. That man ventures more than his life who places his happineſs in another's keeping: you ſhould therefore be well acquainted with Auguſta, before you fix your attachment beyond the poſſibility of recal.

" Underſtand me right: I do not mean to inſinuate that Auguſta has one unfavourable trait; I know little of her, either from perſonal acquaintance or report, as ſhe has chiefly reſided with her aunt in London; yet, in juſtice to her, I muſt acknowledge that what I have heard has been greatly to her advantage.

" But, Theodore, there requires an unity of ſentiment before there can be an union of ſouls. I likewiſe am a convert to the opinion you maintained to-day, but which you now ſeem to forget, that youth, till they arrive at a certain age, are not capable of diſtinguiſhing; and although I ſhall readily allow that ſome have more diſcernment, and are better capable of judging what is neceſſary for their own happineſs at twenty than others are at thirty, yet ſtill it becomes you to examine your-

ſelf

ſelf well before you decide in your own favour. I do not flatter you when I ſay, that it is my opinion you poſſeſs a ſhare of ſenſe not commonly to be met with in a perſon of your years: it cannot, therefore, be ſo difficult a taſk for you to examine your own ſentiments and feelings as it otherwiſe would. If you are actuated only with a ſtrong deſire to poſſeſs the perſon of the amiable Auguſta, believe me, your attachment is ill-founded, and will be but of ſhort duration. To endeavour to inſpire her with a ſentiment of affection towards you, while you poſſeſſed no better ſentiment towards her, would be cruel, unjuſt, and highly improper. But if, on the contrary, you look forward with the pleaſing hope of enjoying a life of domeſtic felicity with Auguſta, your affection is of ſuch a nature as will ſtand

the teſt of time, by always continuing the ſame; at leaſt, ſuch was the ground-work of my attachment, which neither ill treatment or deſertion has been able to do away.

" Another circumſtance is, there may be a diſparity between your fortunes, which may prevent all hope of ſucceſs upon application to Sir Charles; but of this you are the beſt judge. At all events, you are certain that her father has ſet his heart on ſeeing her married to Freeman: as ſuch, you may depend upon it, your conduct will gain his diſapprobation; which laſt matter he will in a great meaſure have to thank himſelf for, as his want of penetration in this particular is evident. I ſhould have thought," continued Somers, " that the ſentiments you delivered reſpecting matrimony would

have

have been a ſufficient reaſon to have prevented him from ſelecting you as a tutor to his daughter, excluſive of the danger there might be from the ſimilarity of your ages and accompliſhments; but it is what I have had frequent occaſion for obſerving, that the greateſt errors are ſometimes made by thoſe who profeſs to have the moſt penetration. They are always looking into futurity, and ſurmiſing evils that never happen, which prevents them from ſeeing the dangers that ſurround them. Such is the caſe with Sir Charles: his mind is now occupied, and all his ideas abſorbed, in bringing about this projected union; he fancies to himſelf a variety of obſtacles that may ariſe to thwart his wiſhes, and lays plans to do them away: ſo intent is he on this buſineſs, that it never once ſtrikes his imagination that he is at pre-

ſent purſuing the moſt probable method of placing an effectual barrier to all his aerial ſchemes."

Theodore thanked his friend for the advice he had given him, and promiſed to pay every attention to it within his power.

"Once more," ſaid Somers, as he ſet his foot on the threſhold of his door—"once more within my peaceful habitation, where I may enjoy my own thoughts without interruption.

"I have been adviſed to mix with ſociety, as a certain remedy againſt the melancholy that at preſent almoſt overpowers me.

"This day has been pregnant with adventure: I have been forced into a variety of company, and my ideas have been occupied with the concerns of others;

others; but I do not find that it has had the desired effect: on the contrary, it gives me far greater inclination for the pleasures of retirement; for what comfort can a man possibly derive from any other source, who has had his feelings so deeply wounded as mine!"

"Ah! my friend," said Theodore, "how capable are we of judging for others, and not for ourselves.

"Is it possible your spirits can ever survive the shock they have sustained, while you thus give way to unavailing sorrow, and delight in nothing but melancholy and retirement? You are like a man who is troubled with a lethargic complaint taking opium for relief.

"But I will not dwell on the subject, as I am confident you must be aware of

the truth of my obſervation, but have not the power to prevent it."

CHAP. VIII.

EARLY on the enſuing morning, Somers aroſe as uſual, and walked to the temple in his garden, there to indulge himſelf by giving free vent to his thoughts. He placed himſelf in the ſame ſituation he was in on the preceding morning, when Theodore had obſerved him.

While he remained in this penſive attitude, his ſoul wrapt up in contemplation, he was alarmed by a ſudden ruſtling in the buſhes that ſtood near the path leading to the door of the temple, and in

in a moment Freeman made his appearance.

Somers ſtarted from his ſeat, and advanced haſtily towards the door, with an intention of preventing his entrance.

Freeman obſerved it; and, whether it was from curioſity or any other motive I cannot pretend to determine, but he paſſed him, and took a ſeat beſide the table.

" I wiſh to have a few minutes' converſation with you," ſaid he, " and am happy to find you alone."

" There is no perſon will interrupt us in the houſe," rejoined Somers, " and we will adjourn there, if you have no objection."

Freeman caſt his eyes on the inſcription, ' Sacred to Solitude,' then taking off his hat, he very orderly laid it on the table.

" I beg your pardon," ſaid he, " I did not know I was in ſo ſacred a place; but as I am, it is fit I ſhould be uncovered; and as I came here on very ſerious buſineſs, no place can ſuit me better than this."

Somers was vexed at this intruſion, which vexation he betrayed both by his look and manner.

" And now, my friend Somers," ſaid Freeman, " as we are alone . . . . . Oh, I beg your pardon," continued he, viewing the whole-length portrait of a lady and a child, " I did not know I was in ſuch good company.

" This is Venus and Cupid, I preſume: of all the characters I ever heard of, they are the moſt likely to drive a man to a temple dedicated to ſolitude: but it excites my wonder to ſee them placed here.

I ſhould

I ſhould rather conclude that the dedication is only a blind made uſe of to ſcreen your devotions to Venus."

"Mr. Freeman," reſumed Somers, "you wrong me; theſe are not portraits of any fictitious deities, but of characters whom I highly eſteem."

"Oh, ho!" cried Freeman, "your earthly goddeſs, is it? Upon my word, a tolerable figure. What the devil have you done with the original? I long to pay my reſpects to her."

"Let me beg of you," ſaid Somers, "to chooſe ſome other ſubject for your mirth; you cannot wound me in a more tender point than by perſiſting in this converſation,"

"A candid confeſſion," rejoined Freeman. "So then this is the lady who has been able to drive into ſolitude the

once agreeable Somers, and whoſe incomparable charms have converted a lively, animated fellow into a ſlandering cynic? Incomparable indeed! . . . . . But, now I ſurvey her more attentively, I think ſhe is too luſty; and a certain hauteur is diſtinguiſhable in every feature. To be ſure, there is no accounting for fancy: but then, very poſſibly it was her affection for you, her wondrous truth and conſtancy, the evident preference ſhe gave to you of all others—and theſe are valuable traits I muſt confeſs."

"You know not how you wound me," cried Somers; "you are trifling on a ſubject I cannot bear."

"Why ſurely I have not wronged her?" reſumed Freeman. "If ſhe poſſeſſed not theſe laſt qualities, in addition to every other, why is it that you grieve for her loſs?

loſs? Is it poſſible that my philoſophical friend can make ſo ſmall an uſe of his reaſon, as to admit his affections thus far to maſter him? muſt he thus ſeclude himſelf from ſociety for a woman that has no attachment for him? Upon my word, I believe I am the greateſt philoſopher of the two."

"It is a title," replied Somers, "to which I never ſet up a claim.

"When I inform you that the portraits before you are the reſemblance of my wife and child, who have been taught to deſert me, I hope you will no longer perſiſt in making either them or me the objects of your mirth."

"After receiving this information," reſumed Freeman, "you might have depended ſhe would excite no ſentiment in me but deteſtation; unleſs, indeed, ſome

cauſe,

cauſe, which I cannot admit to exiſt, has induced her ſo to act."

"Some other time," ſaid Somers, "perhaps I may acquaint you with the particulars; at preſent you will oblige me by dropping the ſubject, and attending to that for which I am indebted to you for this viſit."

"Your own affairs," replied Freeman, "have ſo far excited my curioſity, that the buſineſs I came upon claims only a ſecond place in my conſideration; yet, to oblige you, I will ſay no more on that head at preſent.

"My motive for viſiting you thus early was in behalf of the amiable girl we reſcued yeſterday from the poſſeſſion of Mrs. Gripe.

"I do not think ſhe was born to figure in ſo menial an employment as that of conveying

conveying fruit to a market; and I am fearful leſt Mrs. Gripe ſhould make uſe of ſome artful method to get her within her power.

"The better, therefore, to ſecure her from all further attempts of that nature, and to place her in a ſphere of life more ſuitable to her abilities, would be for you to ſpeak to my couſin Auguſta—ſhe might be prevailed upon to take her as a companion."

"It certainly would be an eligible ſituation for her," replied Somers, "at the deceaſe of Mrs. Bentley; but I am confident ſhe would not liſten to any propoſal that ſhould ſeparate her from the old lady, although greatly to her advantage; at leaſt, ſuch is my opinion of her.

"Mrs. Bentley has been a ſecond mother to her; ſhe now ſtands in need of Clariſſa's

riſſa's aſſiſtance; to deſert her under ſuch circumſtances, would be cruel and unjuſt.

"Reſpecting Mrs. Gripe, I have no fear whatever from that quarter; ſhe is aware that Clariſſa has friends, who would not permit any injury to be offered her.

"As to her attending the market, I ſhall take effectual precaution to prevent it in future; and had I known the extent of their neceſſitous ſituation, which I was kept in ignorance of through the pride of Mrs Bentley, ſhe ſhould have had no occaſion for embracing ſo humiliating an employment."

"I know not how it is," reſumed Freeman, "but ſomething poſſeſſes me, that ſhe is not the daughter of a cottager;—ſhe muſt have been reduced from an

an exalted ſituation by fortuitous circumſtances."

Somers replied, by acquainting him with her hiſtory as far as it had reached his knowledge.

"I thought as much," reſumed Freeman; "her appearance of itſelf is almoſt ſufficient to denote it.—Suppoſe we pay them a morning viſit, and enquire how ſhe is after her fright of yeſterday?"

"I have no objection to go there when I have breakfaſted," replied Somers; "but not now, it is too early.

"Mrs. Bentley, I muſt inform you, is very proud; and ſhe would look upon ſo early a viſit as a want of reſpect—a liberty we ſhould not have taken, had ſhe been in different circumſtances. I am of opinion, that greater reſpect is due to thoſe who have fallen in the world, than

to

to others, as they muſt be more ſuſceptible than they could be if they were in the poſſeſſion of affluence."

"I ſubſcribe to your opinion," rejoined Freeman; "and am ſorry it is ſo frequently the caſe; but more particularly on their account, as I have a fifty-pound note that is infinitely at their ſervice"—at the ſame time producing it;—"but I know not how to preſent it to them without gaining their diſpleaſure."

"I am confident," reſumed Somers, "they do not ſtand in need of it at preſent; beſides, a part of it would be ſufficient to ſend, as ſo large a ſum would look conſpicuous, and incline them to imagine I had acquainted you with their ſtory. It is true, I was not deſired to keep it a ſecret; yet, perhaps, ſhe would not thank me for divulging it. It is not

for

for me ſet bounds to your generoſity; but where a variety of diſtreſſed objects preſent themſelves, we ſhould give to every one a proportion, according to our abilites and their ſeveral wants."

"This I ſhall readily admit," replied Freeman; "yet I have met with no one hitherto for whom I have felt ſo great an intereſt, or ſo ſtrong a deſire to relieve. But, come, why do you procraſtinate the hour of breakfaſt? I am all anxiety and impatience till I ſhall have an opportunity of ſeeing her."

"Seeing who?" cried Somers.—"Who is it that creates this anxiety and impatience?"

"Can you be ſo dull of comprehenſion?" replied Freeman.—"Who ſhould it be but Clariſſa?"

"And why is this?" reſumed Somers.

"Do

"Do you mean that I ſhould put an improper conſtruction on your propoſed generoſity? Examine your own feelings, and ſee if there is no ſenſual motive maſked under this ſtroke of friendſhip."

"None, by Heaven!" replied Freeman. "I ſhould have thought my conduct of yeſterday would have prevented you from harbouring ſo mean a ſuſpicion of me: cannot a man ſee, admire, and relieve one of the oppoſite ſex, without wiſhing to become her deſtroyer?"

"Certainly he can," replied Somers; "but you ſpoke of your anxiety and impatience with ſo much fervency, and with the ardour of a man enraptured, that I confeſs it rather ſurpriſed me."

The breakfaſt bell now ſummoned their attendance, and put an end to the converſation.

Freeman

Freeman requeſted pen, ink, and paper, as he had a letter to write, which he wiſhed to be conveyed home. After he had finiſhed it, he diſpatched a neighbouring cottager with it, and then followed Somers to the breakfaſt parlour.

Theodore ſhortly made his appearance. He thanked Freeman for his kind interpoſition on the preceding day, and enquired reſpecting the health of Sir Charles and Auguſta.

"They are perfectly well," replied Freeman. "I know not what you have ſaid or done," continued he, "but you have placed yourſelf effectually in their eſtimation. I had nothing to attend to, after your departure, but extravagant encomiums laviſhly beſtowed on you by Sir Charles, all which were readily aſſented to by Auguſta, and generally with an addition.

dition. Then your muſical talents were beyond all deſcription; you played divinely: her ſoul, as ſhe expreſſed it, was led away by the maſterly ſtyle with which you performed. I thought," continued Freeman, " I could diſcover ſomething lurking under theſe encomiums, and therefore obſerved (although I muſt confeſs rather incautiouſly), that ſo elegant a young man as Theodore Somers could not fail of attracting the admiration of the ladies, without the addition of ſo pleaſing a talent.

" My couſin's face was covered with crimſon, and Sir Charles cried, ' Why, I hope, Freeman, you are not jealous?' I replied, it was impoſſible I could, as both Auguſta and myſelf had come to a right underſtanding reſpecting our affection for each other, that precluded the neceſſity

neceſſity of jealouſy or ſuſpicion on either ſide. ‘ Why, that is as it ſhould be,’ reſumed my uncle ; ‘ and it gives me great pleaſure to find that it is ſo.’ I bowed, and Sir Charles went on by obſerving, that as I had not heard from my father lately, I muſt be in want of ſome remittances, and then very graciouſly preſented me with a fifty-pound note. The fact is, I was not ſhort of money, but as I wiſhed to render ſome pecuniary aſſiſtance to a friend in need, I thought it would be unhandſome in me to refuſe the old gentleman's offer, and therefore accepted it with pleaſure. It makes me ſmile," continued Freeman " when I ſee a man who thinks he poſſeſſes the greateſt foreſight in the world ſo induſtrious in impoſing upon himſelf."

" How is this?" ſaid Somers, who had obſerved

the extreme anxiety pictured in the countenance of Theodore during this ſhort recital; "I cannot conceive how Sir Charles can impoſe upon himſelf, when you candidly own an exiſting affection between yourſelf and Auguſta."

"I beg your pardon," reſumed Freeman; "you are not authoriſed to draw that inference from my words, not even if I ſhould inform you our affections were mutual."

"It is true," rejoined Somers, "the words will admit of being differently conſtrued; but I ſhould ſcarcely think it poſſible you could avoid having a ſerious attachment for ſo amiable a character as Auguſta; and, if you have not, I am at a loſs for the motives that can induce you to deceive Sir Charles reſpecting it: he certainly would ſooner overlook a candid

avowal

avowal of your ſentiments, although contrary to his wiſhes, than he can be brought to endure this deception; more particularly as it will call his own judgment in queſtion, and place his profound penetration, upon which he ſo highly values himſelf, in a very ridiculous light."

"Sir Charles is at liberty," replied Freeman, "to put what conſtruction he pleaſes upon my conduct; he can at all times conſole himſelf with the knowledge that it was himſelf who forced me into it."

"Is it poſſible then," ſaid Theodore, "that you have no affection for Auguſta?"

"You are in an error," replied Freeman; "I poſſeſs a lively affection for my couſin, and I am poſitive that affection is as amply returned by her."

Theodore turned pale.—"I ſee how it is with you," continued Freeman; "your

conduct of yesterday was fully explanatory of your sentiments, without any farther proof; and I am fearful this business must terminate in a duel."

Theodore was relieved from the anxiety this assurance would have created, by a significant look which he observed Freeman give to Somers when he uttered it.

"I hope," said Somers, "there will be no occasion for such a remedy."

"I am inclined to think there will not," resumed Freeman; "but that you may judge for yourselves, I will make you acquainted with a few particulars."—

CHAP. IX.

"AT an early period of life I was ſent for to my uncle's, who at all times took a delight in mentioning his wiſhes reſpecting an union between Auguſta and myſelf.

"As we advanced in years, he ſpoke of it as an event that had been ſettled between my father and him, from which there was no receding. I am of opinion that this apparent compulſion was what firſt wrought in me a ſpirit of reſiſtance.

"I have no fault whatever," continued Freeman, "to find with Auguſta; the moſt envious woman muſt allow that ſhe is extremely handſome; ſhe needs but to be ſeen to be admired. But this is trifling when compared with the endow-

ments of her mind. She ſpeaks ſeveral languages fluently; is in poſſeſſion of ſome of the fine arts; plays enchantingly on various muſical inſtruments; poſſeſſes a large ſhare of ſenſe; and is withal ſo merciful, that no culprit brought before her father meets his deſert, if it is in her power to mitigate it. In addition to this, her benevolence is ſuch, that no petitioner is ſuffered to feel the weight of ſorrow through pecuniary embarraſſments, where ſhe has the power to relieve.

"Yet, with all theſe rare accompliſhments, and this amiable diſpoſition, Auguſta has not been able to touch the heart of Freeman. I cannot but admire her, and, as my relation, ſhe poſſeſſes a large ſhare of my affection. I do not think, if ſhe were my ſiſter, I could eſteem her more. I examined this affection, and found I had

had no ſpark of that tender attachment which is ſo neceſſary to be poſſeſſed for the perſon I ſhould be inclined to paſs my life with.

" I endeavoured to diſcover what ſentiment actuated Auguſta; but ſo remarkably tender and aſſiduous was ſhe, that I was not able to diſtinguiſh whether this conduct originated in her natural diſpoſition, increaſed by her being my relation, or from an intereſt I had in her heart; and therefore determined on an explanation, and that for the following reaſons:

" I thought there was a poſſibility that ſhe (in compliance with the will of her father) might be endeavouring to make up her mind to the wiſhed-for alliance. In ſuch caſe, it would be neceſſary on my part to ſignify my ſtrong diſinclination to it, leſt ſhe ſhould ſuffer her heart to be

ultimately engaged; or, if I found that the latter was really the caſe, then to make up my mind to it, as Auguſta was the laſt perſon in the world whoſe feelings I could think of wounding, or whoſe pride I would mortify by a refuſal.

"As to Sir Charles, I never could have a moment of uneaſineſs on his account; he had no motive in propoſing the match but what originated in an idea that Auguſta was as partial to his title and eſtate as was himſelf; he therefore naturally wiſhed ſhe might poſſeſs them through a marriage with me, as I am heir to both: and, with reſpect to my father, I was confident, from the whole of his conduct to me through life, that, whatever he might ſay to me to the contrary, he would finally leave me to the free and unbiaſſed exerciſe of my judgment.

"It

" It was not long," continued Freeman, " before I found an opportunity of entering into the explanation ſo much wiſhed for.

" Sir Charles poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſum in the funds: an eſtate is now on ſale contiguous to his own; this eſtate he is inclined to purchaſe for his daughter; but, before he entered into a treaty for it, he determined to conſult with us upon the buſineſs.

" Sir Charles, Auguſta, and myſelf, had juſt breakfaſted when he introduced the ſubject.

" ' I need not,' ſaid he, ' inform you, that my brother and myſelf have deſigned you for each other from your infancy.

" ' I flatter myſelf I poſſeſs no ſmall ſhare of penetration; by which I plainly diſcover, that the plan is far from being

disagreeable to either of you.' He then, addressing me, bestowed a few handsome encomiums upon Augusta; after which, *vice versa,* he paid a few compliments to your unfortunate orator, from which he drew a false conclusion—that it was impossible two people so accomplished could fail of having a lively attachment for each other.

"'I need not ask you,' continued Sir Charles, 'whether it is so, as I can read it in the satisfaction of your looks.'

"Here my wise uncle was in an error, for I am confident I never looked so foolish in my life. I stole a glance at Augusta, to see what kind of satisfaction was seated in her countenance; but I could discern nothing there except a visible uneasiness.

"Sir Charles seemed waiting for a reply,

ply, by way of confirmation; but as I had not conſulted with Auguſta, I felt myſelf embarraſſed, and was only capable of anſwering with a nod, and a ſmile which I forced into my countenance, contrary to my feelings.

" This was ſufficient for Sir Charles, who at all times appeared eager to impoſe upon himſelf. He then declared his intention of purchaſing the eſtate in queſtion, provided we approved of it; alleging, that he thought we ought to be conſulted on it, as it was ultimately to be ours.

" I thanked him in as polite a manner as I poſſibly could for his condeſcenſion, after which, to relieve my mind from the embarraſſment he had occaſioned, I walked into the garden. In a few minutes I beheld Auguſta walking down a path

in the pleaſure ground, ſeemingly loſt in thoughts of an unpleaſant nature.

" I advanced towards her, and taking her by the hand, ſeated her in an arbour. I then recapitulated the converſation of Sir Charles, and requeſted a candid avowal of her ſentiments.

" ' Edward,' ſhe replied, ' I am of opinion we eſteem each other ſo much in our preſent relative ſituation, that it cannot be increaſed by any other tie: ſuch eſteem is very different from that which would be requiſite in forming a happy union. I feel for you the affection of a ſiſter, but no further.

" ' I readily admit,' continued ſhe, ' the truth of the encomiums my father beſtowed on you this morning, and am confident you would make the perſon happy that you may be allied to; but I feel,

Edward,

Edward, that I am not to be the perſon, nor ſhall I ever harbour ſuch an idea till my wiſhes are conſonant with it, and my heart approves it.'

" Being thus relieved," continued Freeman, " from the anxiety of my mind by the candid declaration of my couſin, I ſeemed to have acquired new life; and, in as delicate and feeling a manner as I could, acquainted her, in reply, with the ſimilarity of our ſentiments; which aſſurance, on my ſide, adminiſtered the ſame relief to her. The only ſubject that now required our ſerious conſideration, was how to conduct ourſelves before Sir Charles. We were of opinion there was no occaſion to excite his reſentment by an avowal, till ſuch time as he wiſhed for its completion; in ſuch intermediate ſpace various occurrences might happen,

that would make him bear the diſappointment with more patience than he could do at preſent; and therefore determined to conduct ourſelves as uſual. Not that I have any great reaſon to fear his reſentment: he can, it is true, injure his eſtate, and alienate a ſmall part of it; but this would not force me into a marriage contrary to my feelings; nor could any conſideration whatever compel me to do ſo great an act of injuſtice to my couſin, by taking her when my heart diſapproved of it; or to be guilty of ſo great a folly as to ally myſelf to a perſon who declares ſhe poſſeſſes no other ſentiment than friendſhip, ariſing from our relative ſituation."

"Nothing could give me greater ſatisfaction," ſaid Theodore, "than the recital you have obliged us with. Auguſta being

being totally at liberty, her heart and hand undiſpoſed of, I ſhall, with your permiſſion, endeavour to recommend myſelf to her notice."

"I have been the more particular," replied Freeman, "in relating this buſineſs, becauſe I thought, from what I could obſerve yeſterday, and the queſtions that were put to me this morning, that you had a ſecret wiſh to be placed in my ſituation. If therefore you can ſatisfy me that your expectations in life are ſuch as ought to entitle you to hope for a favourable reception, I will do my utmoſt to promote your intereſt."

Theodore thanked him for his offer in a manner that plainly ſhewed how highly acceptable his proffered ſervice would be to him, and promiſed to give him every ſatisfaction he required.

Breakfaſt

Breakfaſt being ended, Freeman again expreſſed his impatience to pay a viſit to Mrs. Bentley's cottage. Somers agreed to accompany him, and Theodore preferred remaining at home.

They croſſed the river, and ſhortly arrived at the cottage. When Somers and Freeman entered the door, Clariſſa, who was engaged at her needle, roſe from her ſeat.

Freeman bowed reſpectfully. In fact, he did not know her, ſo great an alteration had dreſs made in her favour.

On the preceding day ſhe had put up her hair under a cloſe cap, on her head ſhe wore a flat hat, and the reſidue of her dreſs was covered by a ſtuff joſeph-coat. But having now no occaſion to diſguiſe herſelf, her hair was hanging in natural ringlets careleſsly on her ſhoulders,

ders, ſhe wore a ſmall cottage bonnet, and white muſlin dreſs.

Clariſſa curtſied, and handed him a chair; at the ſame time calling him by his name, and aſſuring him how highly gratified ſhe was, in receiving a viſit from her protector.

"Is it poſſible," ſaid Freeman, "you can be the ſame perſon I had the honour of attending here yeſterday? I then obſerved an elegance of manner, and a degree of beauty not commonly to be met with, and which I thought it was impoſſible for dreſs to improve; but what I now behold convinces me to the contrary."

Clariſſa bluſhed: ſhe poſſeſſed not the power of rallery, and if ſhe did, her forlorn ſituation had too much humbled her ſpirits to ſuffer her to make uſe of it. Somers beheld her embarraſſment, and relieved

relieved her by enquiring for Mrs. Bentley.

Clariſſa replied by informing him that ſhe remained as uſual, and that ſhe expected her to make her appearance in a few minutes.

While Clariſſa was ſpeaking, a man entered and delivered her a letter, ſaying he brought it from a gentleman in Briſtol, and it required no anſwer.

Before ſhe could break the ſeal the meſſenger was gone.

Clariſſa haſtily opened it, and peruſed the contents. "Thank Heaven!" exclaimed ſhe, "our friend has not forgotten us." Then delivering it to Somers, he read as follows:

'MADAM,

'I am deſired by Mr. Morris to for-
'ward the incloſed to you: he is ſorry
'that

'that his circumſtances have been ſuch
'as to have prevented him from ſending
'you a ſupply ſooner; but he deſires me
'to aſſure you he will endeavour to be
'more punctual for the future.

'I am, Madam,
'for Mr. Morris,
'Your moſt obedient,
'THOS. CHAPMAN.'

The incloſed was a bank-note for fifty pounds.

Somers congratulated her upon the circumſtance, and ſhe haſtened to inform Mrs. Bentley, who ſhortly after entered the room in company with her.—"I ſhould not be ſo much ſurpriſed," ſaid Mrs. Bentley, addreſſing herſelf to Somers, "at the receipt of this from Mr. Morris, if I could account for the poſſibility of his

his finding out our place of reſidence, as I made no perſon acquainted with it."

"I confeſs," rejoined Somers, "it appears ſingular; nor can I account for the letter being wrote by another perſon."

An idea now entered the mind of Somers that made him requeſt another ſight of the note and letter.

It ſo happened, that when Freeman produced the note in the morning, Somers had obſerved a blot under the word 'Fifty,' which blot he plainly diſtinguiſhed on the note in queſtion.

He was no longer at a loſs to account for this tranſaction; but did not think proper to acquaint them with it: yet he gave a ſignificant look to Freeman, which ſtrongly teſtified that he had a knowledge of his being the author of the letter.

Freeman,

Freeman, fearing leſt this buſineſs ſhould be farther inveſtigated, gave a turn to the converſation by admiring various pieces of needle-work that were framed and hung around the room, and requeſted to know whoſe performance they were.

Mrs. Bentley replied they were Clariſſa's, and dwelt largely in her praiſe: amongſt other things ſhe mentioned an arbour that Clariſſa had ingeniouſly formed, and deſired ſhe would ſhew it to Mr. Freeman.

Clariſſa complied.

Freeman admired it, and requeſted that he might be allowed to bring his couſin to ſee it: at the ſame time alleging he ſhould be happy to introduce Auguſta to the acquaintance of ſo amiable a character as Clariſſa Leſley.

Clariſſa

Clariſſa thanked him for the honour he intended her, but thought the performance too inſignificant for Auguſta's notice, and was likewiſe fearful the ſphere Providence had placed her in was too humble for her to look forward to the friendſhip or acquaintance of his couſin; yet, ſhould he be able to prevail on her to viſit the cottage, ſhe ſhould conſider herſelf highly honoured by her company.

"You know little of my couſin," ſaid Freeman, "if you ſuppoſe ſhe would not be delighted with your ſociety; ſhe is truly amiable: I am confident you cannot but eſteem each other; while I ſhall have the ſatisfaction of knowing that I have been the means of forming a friendſhip between two of the moſt amiable objects the country can produce.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

WHILE Clariſſa was thanking him for the compliment (as ſhe ſtyled it), a gentleman made his appearance at the front of the garden.

He ſtood a few moments as if looking for the gate; at length diſcovering it, he entered, and approached the ſpot where Freeman and Clariſſa ſtood converſing; then aſſuming an air of profound reſpect, requeſted they would inform him the way to the next village, alleging that having been out for a morning's ramble, he had miſtaken his road.

Freeman immediately recogniſed in the ſtranger the features of Sir Thomas Blan-

ford,

ford, and, addreſſing him by his name, offered to conduct him.

Sir Thomas profeſſed to be thankful, but having met with Freeman, with whom he was only ſlightly acquainted, he ſeemed to be in no haſte to purſue his ramble, and declined his offer; ſignifying that he ſhould not be ſo deficient in good manners as to deprive him of the company of his amiable companion.

Freeman replied, by obſerving it would occaſion his abſence but a few minutes, as it was not a quarter of a mile from the place he wiſhed to find.

Sir Thomas ſtill lingered: he profeſſed to be faſcinated with the ſpot, admired the romantic ſituation, the ſtupendous rocks, the hanging wood, the fertile vale, the winding ſtream, and the aſſemblage of

of beauty that every-where ſurrounded him. As to the garden, it was, in his opinion, beyond any thing he had ever ſeen upon ſo ſmall a ſcale: and having been informed the arbour was Clariſſa's performance, he diſſected the whole of it; admired each component part, and declared his aſtoniſhment that nature could be ſo wonderfully improved; but admitted it might proceed from the exquiſite taſte and admirable talents of Clariſſa.

Freeman readily admitted the truth of his obſervations reſpecting the ſituation; but pointed out ſtill greater beauties they ſhould meet with in their walk to the next village, which he adviſed him to purſue.

Sir Thomas could no longer be deaf to theſe hints, and finding no inclination

to

to depart, he declared, that having met with ſuch good company, he ſhould ſpend the morning with them, if they had no objection.

This appeal to Freeman's politeneſs had ſo far the deſired effect, that he no longer urged him to purſue his ramble; but informed him he had viſited Mrs. Bentley on a matter of buſineſs; that having now nothing further to detain him, he ſhould return home, and ſhould be proud of his company.

"Nothing further to detain you!" exclaimed Sir Thomas; "what a horrid compliment are you paying to this amiable cottager!" Then taking his glaſs, which hung dangling to his button, and ſtaring for a minute on Clariſſa, while he manufactured a phraſe: "I vow to God," cried he, "I could dwell for years on the proſpect

proſpect of ſo much lovelineſs:—Permit me, my little agreeable wood-nymph," continued he, "to apologiſe for my friend Freeman; his heart, my dear girl, muſt certainly be diſpoſed of, or poſitively he would feel a ſpark of that fire which at preſent animates me. It always was my misfortune to melt before the ſunſhine of beauty;—the effects of poſſeſſing too feeling a heart."

"I am happy," ſaid Freeman, "to hear you profeſs yourſelf a man of feeling, as I think, when you view the confuſion your converſation has thrown this lady into, there is immediate occaſion for the exerciſe of it, by dropping the ſubject."

Clariſſa had in a ſmall degree recovered herſelf, and turning to Freeman, "I requeſt," ſaid ſhe, "you will permit Sir

Thomas to amuſe himſelf; the poverty and humble ſituation of the object will always plead an excuſe in the breaſt of a modern fine gentleman for the ſtyle with which he may think proper to addreſs her."

Sir Thomas felt the full force of this retort, yet was preparing to defend himſelf with the utmoſt effrontery, by a repetition, when Somers advanced towards them.

No ſooner did Sir Thomas obſerve him than he ſeemed to loſe his confidence; he heſitated and ſtammered, without being able to articulate a ſentence; yet, although he was deficient in point of words, he made ample amends by his actions; he bowed repeatedly to Somers, with every appearance of profound reſpect, while Somers ſtood fixt like a ſtatue,

tue, ſo great was his ſurpriſe on meeting him at the cottage.

After a pauſe for a few moments, Somers broke ſilence, by requeſting of Sir Thomas, if Mrs. Bentley were his tenant or his debtor.

Sir Thomas replied that ſhe was neither.

"That is rather unfortunate," reſumed Somers, "as it would afford you an ample means to practiſe ſome of thoſe virtues for which you are moſt famous. I am at a loſs," continued he, "to account for your viſit here this morning; but I have no doubt it was for ſome benevolent purpoſe."

There was a marked diſapprobation and ſneer on the features of Somers while he ſpoke, that left Sir Thomas no room to doubt concerning the true meaning of

his words; yet he determined not to underſtand him, but to carry it off as lightly as poſſible: and fearing leſt Clariſſa or Freeman ſhould harbour an ill opinion of him, "Faith," replied he, "I have indeed been curſed unfortunate this morning, not having met with any perſon who has ſolicited relief; nor have I any petition by me at preſent that requires anſwering."

"I am extremely ſorry," rejoined Somers in the ſame ſtrain of irony, "that a gentleman famous for the practice of benevolence, ſhould be ſo unfortunate as to poſſeſs a bad recollection; and ſince I find you conſider it a misfortune not to be acquainted with any one who ſtands in need of your aſſiſtance, you force me to remind you of the unfortunate Mr. Bridport."

"I beg,

"I beg, Mr. Somers," cried Sir Thomas, interrupting him, "you will not mention that fellow's name; he treated me with unparalleled inſolence, and has met with his deſerts."

"You muſt excuſe me," reſumed Somers; "I ſhall always remind you of him, in whatever company I find you, until you have endeavoured to make ſome reparation for the injury you have done him. As to his deſerts, poor unfortunate man, he deſerves a better fate; yet, had his ſufferings been the reward of his crimes, inſtead of his virtues, it ill becomes you to wreſt from your Creator the prerogative of puniſhing."

"Your ſentiments and mine," replied Sir Thomas, "are extremely different: you ſeem to infer, that every man who

robs upon the highway, or commits any act, however atrocious, ſhould be left to receive his puniſhment till the day of judgment: why, ſir, you would do away, by this doctrine, the greateſt bleſſing of Engliſhmen—a trial by jury."

"If he has committed an offence," rejoined Somers, "why did you not leave him to the verdict of a jury?—but well enough you knew they would have held him guiltleſs."

"You will allow, I hope," cried Sir Thomas, "there are ſome offences of a heinous nature, that are daily committed, and which the law can take no cognizance of; in ſuch caſe, where the offended party can find no redreſs from his country, it becomes him to be his own avenger, provided he has the means in his

his power; thoſe means I have, and nothing ſhall make me diſcontinue to exerciſe them."

"I readily admit, ſir," reſumed Somers, "there are crimes committed daily which the law can take no cognizance of; for inſtance, a man may ſeduce the daughter of his tenant and his friend, lead away her young mind by promiſes of marriage, and having reduced her to an equality with the refuſe of her ſpecies, deſert her a prey to wretchedneſs, poverty, and ſhame; and to aggravate this infamous conduct, if her unfortunate father, whoſe ſum of happineſs was centered in his child, ſhould dare even to whiſper a complaint, then the vile ſeducer of his daughter throws him in a priſon: theſe, ſir, are crimes that the law can take no cognizance of. On the other

hand, if a poor wretch meets a man on the highway, and takes a few ſhillings from him that he can well ſpare, and never feel the loſs of, yet ſhall this wretch ſuffer death: compare the crimes, and ſee who moſt deſerves condign puniſhment, he who takes a purſe, or you—you, Sir Thomas, who robs a man of all his ſtore of happineſs."

"A truce with this inſolence," cried Sir Thomas; "I do not feel inclined to put up with any more of it. If you think I have acted wrong, and are determined to become my tenant's champion, I wear a ſword, and ſhall at all times be ready to anſwer you."

"You wear a ſword," rejoined Somers, "then uſe it in a better cauſe. What have I ſaid that has given you offence? I have repeated your own conduct; is that

that a crime? learn never to do an act that you are aſhamed of, and you will not bluſh at hearing it repeated.

"You wear a ſword! ſo may a highwayman: but, ſir, I meet none but gentlemen, nor ſhall all that you can ſay force me to become the executioner of a criminal, however infamous his conduct, or richly deſerving of his fate.

"You may wear your ſword with ſafety; I ſhall not put it in your power to add the crime of murder to the catalogue of your vices."

"Then, ſir," cried Sir Thomas, furiouſly, "you are a wretched poltroon, and I ſhall poſt you for a coward in all companies."

"Juſt as you pleaſe reſpecting that," replied Somers; "I have no doubt but

the world in general will approve of my conduct when the particulars are made public; and I give you my word it ſhortly will be the caſe, as I have drawn out a petition for Mr. Bridport, which will be ſent to the printer's, and ſome thouſand copies will be circulated.

"This petition gives a ſtatement of the facts, with the names of all the parties at full length; and ſolicits the charity of the humane and benevolent to aſſiſt him with the means of his diſcharge."

"Have a care what you do, ſir," cried Sir Thomas; "you will perhaps afford me an opportunity of proſecuting you for a libel."

"Depend upon it," rejoined Somers, "I ſhall attend to your advice. I ſhall not advance any thing but what I can authenticate.

authenticate. You cannot, or at leaſt you ought not to blame me for rendering your virtues conſpicuous to the world."

"Mr. Freeman," ſaid Sir Thomas, "I will appeal to you; is this the conduct of a gentleman? or has Mr. Somers any right to interfere in a private quarrel between me and my tenant?"

"I can ſee no impropriety," replied Freeman, "in the conduct of Mr. Somers. Nothing is more common than to petition the wealthy in caſes of diſtreſs; but if you think an explanation of the circumſtances will bear hard upon you, you had better put it out of his power by giving the poor man his diſcharge."

"As to that," rejoined Sir Thomas, "if an application had been properly made, perhaps I ſhould have had no

objection; but to be forced to it in this way, I never can ſubmit to."

"Do not endeavour to perſuade him," cried Somers, addreſſing himſelf to Freeman; "I would not for a trifle loſe the pleaſure of adding another laurel to the brow of Sir Thomas. I have no doubt but I ſhall be able to procure his diſcharge without appealing to his humanity; and I promiſe myſelf great ſatisfaction in proceeding to his houſe at the head of ſome of the principal gentlemen in the county, and tendering him down the money."

"You may render yourſelf as ridiculous as you pleaſe," rejoined Sir Thomas; "for, I aſſure you, not all that you can do ſhall force me to liberate the man, while I have the power to hold him."

This

This converſation was put an end to by a party appearing in ſight, who were evidently bending their courſe towards the cottage.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

WHEN Sir Charles had parted from Theodore and Somers on the preceding evening, he began by obſerving to Freeman and Auguſta, that the appearance of Theodore had greatly prepoſſeſſed him in his favour.

" I know not," continued he, " any young man more capable of handling a bad cauſe to advantage than himſelf; but I am inclined to think the diſagreement between his uncle and him originates in his having imbibed too independent a ſpirit. He totally excludes the authority of a parent to interfere with the marriage of his child; and poſſitively aſſerts, were it his caſe, he ſhould not

not conſider himſelf guilty of a breach of duty in refuſing, provided he had no affection for the party propoſed."

Edward ſaw the drift of Sir Charles, and rightly imagined he only recapitulated the opinion of Theodore for the purpoſe of gaining his ideas on the ſubject; for this reaſon he determined on giving an evaſive reply.

"It is a happy circumſtance," ſaid Edward, "where the wiſhes of a parent and child are mutual, as, in ſuch a caſe, it renders all argument on the ſubject uſeleſs."

"Do you think," reſumed Sir Charles, "it would admit of any argument in its favour?"

"Theodore, it ſeems," replied Edward, "made uſe of ſome; but there is every excuſe for him, he never knew his parents,

parents, and having never experienced their careſſes, it cannot be ſuppoſed he ſhould feel that ſtrong inclination to oblige them, as otherwiſe would be the caſe."

"You think, then, there needs an excuſe?" rejoined Sir Charles. "Come, let me hear your ſentiments candidly; for, to confeſs the truth, I ſhould not be inclined to forward an acquaintance between Theodore and you, if I thought you were inclined to his opinion, leſt his arguments ſhould ſtrengthen you in ſuch a miſtaken notion; beſide which, there was a degree of irony in your expreſſion, when you entered the room to-day, and interrupted our argument, that calls for an explanation on this head."

Edward ſaw, or thought he ſaw, the dawn of affection between Theodore and

Auguſta;

Auguſta; an event which, if real, might tend to rid him of any further perplexing importunities; he therefore determined on giving ſuch a reply, although evaſive, as ſhould ſatisfy Sir Charles, and throw him off his guard.

"Would you have me," ſaid Edward, "declare, that duty to my father, and ſubmiſſion to the will of my uncle, were the reaſons that would induce me to attend Auguſta to the altar? or, would ſhe not be more ſatisfied to hear, that a ſerious and grounded affection on my ſide was my only incitement?"

"That is very true," replied Sir Charles; "no doubt the laſt aſſurance would make her the moſt happy; but can you give her that aſſurance?"

This was a queſtion ſo direct, that perplexed him to anſwer, and drove him to the

the neceſſity of a moment's pauſe; at length he replied, "Why really, ſir, I do not think there is any occaſion for an umpire in this buſineſs; Auguſta and myſelf can come to a right underſtanding without the interference of a third perſon; but, as you expreſs a wiſh to be ſatisfied, I will confeſs to you, that having a ſincere regard for Auguſta, and having imbibed ſome doubts of her real regard for me, I ſpoke to her on the ſubject, and had the happineſs to find our affections were mutual."

"Why, this is as it ſhould be," rejoined Sir Charles in ecſtacy: "ſuch a candid avowal on your part gives me great pleaſure, as it effectually removes every ſuſpicion I had to the contrary. Come, come, Auguſta, do not bluſh at what gives me ſuch infinite ſatisfaction."

Auguſta

Auguſta ſmiled.

" I ſhould not," continued Sir Charles, " deſerve the character I have acquired for penetration, if I could not plainly diſcern that the candid acknowledgment of Edward gives you pleaſure. I have a letter to write, and ſhall therefore leave you together for a few minutes, to enjoy that perfect happineſs which only can be felt by thoſe whoſe hearts are in uniſon, like yours."

Here Sir Charles's penetration had overſhot its mark.

Auguſta had with ſilence attended to her father's cloſe examination of Edward, and trembled for the event. The bluſh was occaſioned by a conſciouſneſs of the impoſition practiſed upon him; and the ſmile was forced into her features in compliment to Edward, who was behind the back

back of Sir Charles, enjoying a laugh at his expence.

When Sir Charles had quitted the room, Auguſta declared that ſhe was inadequate to the taſk impoſed upon her; for that ſhe ſhould be unable, from ſentiments of duty and affection to Sir Charles, to perſevere in ſo manifeſt a deception.

"A truce with compunction," exclaimed Edward; "I had ſomething of that ſentiment prevailing within me during my converſation with your father; but his laſt remark obliterated every ſhadow of it, and ſet my mind perfectly at reſt:—did he not ſay, he would leave us together for a few minutes to enjoy that perfect happineſs which only could be felt by thoſe whoſe hearts were in uniſon like ours? This expreſſion plainly teſtifies

ſies that he has known what it was to love with ſincerity, and to have that love returned; he has therefore no excuſe on the plea of ignorance, for aſſerting that you ought to marry in compliance to his will, although your heart may be eſtranged frcm the party. If he is aware that perfect happineſs can be attained only by ſuch characters, inheriting ſuch ſentiments, what plea can he make uſe of in palliation of his conduct reſpecting us, to whom he has repeatedly pledged himſelf, that he would ſee our union accompliſhed whether we had an affection for each other or not?"

"However inexcuſable my father may be," ſaid Auguſta, "or however wrong he may act, it does not follow that I ſhould be guilty of an impropriety of conduct

duct in carrying on a deception; ſuch a practice is repugnant to my feelings."

"He forces you," reſumed Edward, "to adopt this line of conduct; the propriety or impropriety of which I ſhall not argue upon, but leave it to your own deciſion; and, if I am not greatly miſtaken, you will ſhortly feel a neceſſity for adopting it."

"From whence ſhould this neceſſity ariſe?" ſaid Auguſta; "for I am at a loſs to aſcertain it."

"Ah, my dear couſin," ſaid Edward, "you may impoſe upon yourſelf as much as you pleaſe, but you cannot impoſe upon me: I will name to you the cauſe in one word, 'Theodore.' Now, hide that bluſh, or you will explain more than you intend."

"Upon

" Upon my word, Edward, you are very rude," cried Auguſta; " your wiſdom for once is in an error; the bluſh was the effect of your ſuſpicion, and is no confirmation of the truth of it. Theodore is certainly a very amiable young man, and I felt . . . ."

" Aye," cried Edward, interrupting her, " that is what I wiſh to be informed of; what were your feelings when in his company?"

" Nothing more, I aſſure you," replied ſhe, " than what any other perſon would have experienced; I felt intereſted in his behalf."

" And this," reſumed Edward, on " account of his appearing ſo *very amiable?*"

" Amiable!" ſaid Auguſta; " do not dwell upon my words: I hope I may ſay that

that Theodore is amiable, without having the expreſſion tortured to an improper meaning?"

"That we may come to a right underſtanding," reſumed Edward, "permit me to aſk you one queſtion, Would you have felt ſo much intereſted in his behalf had he poſſeſſed the manners and appearance of either of the men that brought him here?"

"Certainly not," replied Auguſta; "but that is no criterion to judge by. You muſt allow that ſome perſons may ſtrongly intereſt me in their behalf from their appearance more than others, and yet I may be totally free from that ſentiment which you inſinuate is poſſeſſed by me: my father, for inſtance, profeſſes himſelf intereſted in his behalf."

"That argument is concluſive," rejoined

joined Edward.—" I beg your pardon for having troubled you with my opinion, which originated from what I imagined I saw in your countenance when you were together; but I am happy, on your account, that it is not so; and my only reason for introducing the subject was, to warn you against any fascination that might take place on your side; for, to tell you the truth, Theodore had the address effectually to impose on your father respecting the reasons that induced him to quit his uncle's protection.

" Somers acquainted me with the whole particulars, as we were walking from his house to this; the sum of which is, that Theodore has placed an attachment on an amiable girl; his uncle insisted on procrastinating the match till he could acquaint his father and receive his

conſent, and meant to remove him, in the mean time, to his ſeat in the country, where he would be at a diſtance from the object; but as Theodore did not approve of ſo tedious a delay, and learning his uncle's intentions reſpecting him, he left his houſe. This accounts for the letter you heard read, and his inſiſting on free-will reſpecting marriage."

The ejaculation of "You ſurpriſe me!" which fell from the lips of the attentive Auguſta at the concluſion of this recital, was followed by a ſigh and a pale languor that overſpread her countenance, which did not eſcape the penetration of Edward.

He concluded that ſhe had either impoſed on herſelf, or wiſhed to impoſe upon him, and was preparing to inform her that the tale was all a fiction of his own,

related

related for the mere purpoſe of eſtimating the ſtrength of her attachment, and confirming the truth of his ſuſpicions; but he was interrupted from ſo doing by the entrance of Sir Charles; after which Auguſta took the firſt opportunity of leaving the room, and, by alleging ſhe had a trifling head-ach, made that a pretence for not returning again during the evening.

Edward naturally concluded the information he had given her reſpecting Theodore was the true cauſe of her abſenting herſelf, and repented that he had trifled with her feelings by forging a tale ſo contrary to truth: he wrote a note for the purpoſe of ſending by Ellen, but was informed ſhe had retired to reſt, and therefore deferred the explanation till the morning.

Auguſta, being an early riſer, was walking in the garden when Edward made his appearance. He had anticipated the pleaſure ſhe would receive on hearing the tale contradicted, and approached her for the purpoſe of rendering that peace to her mind which he concluded ſhe ſtood ſo much in need of, but was prevented from ſo doing by the unuſual appearance of gaiety aſſumed by Auguſta; ſhe ſeemed to be in high ſpirits, and the very life of humour.

This conduct on her ſide made Edward aſhamed to confeſs his ſtratagem, leſt he ſhould have formed a wrong judgment, and ſhould, by an explanation, ſubject himſelf to be laughed at in his turn; concluding, therefore, if there were no reality in his ſuſpicions, it could be of no conſequence to Auguſta what was the real

real motive for Theodore's quitting his uncle's houſe; and, if his ſuſpicions were well grounded, ſhe merited the deceptive conduct he had made uſe of: for theſe reaſons he determined to ſay nothing on the ſubject. Thus did Auguſta, through a falſe pride and want of confidence that needed not to have been exerciſed towards Edward, her near relation and intimate friend, ſuffer many an uneaſy moment, which otherwiſe would not have been the caſe.

Edward therefore left her, for the purpoſe of viſiting Somers, as before related.

Auguſta was ſhortly after joined by her father, who informed her that he meant, as ſoon as he had breakfaſted, to viſit Somers; and deſired ſhe would be ready to walk with him.

This was contrary to a plan ſhe had privately laid down, which was, not to venture herſelf in the company of Theodore till ſhe had perfectly regained that peace of mind ſhe enjoyed prior to her ſeeing him, and therefore requeſted to be excuſed.

Sir Charles preſſed her ſo forcibly, and at length inſiſting on it, ſhe was obliged, although with evident reluctance, to comply.

As ſoon, therefore, as they had finiſhed their morning's beverage, they ſtrolled down the hill to Ciffdown-lodge.

As there were no attendant porters at the gate, they entered unobſerved, and walked through a ſmall ſhrubbery to the houſe, where a ſervant met them, and informed them his maſter was from home, but that Theodore was in the garden; whither

whither Sir Charles bent his way in ſearch of him, taking Auguſta with him.

The firſt object that attracted her notice was Theodore: he was ſitting in a ſmall arbour, formed by woodbine and jeſſamine, his head reclined on his hand, and apparently loſt in thought.

Much as ſhe wiſhed to avoid the ſight of Theodore before ſhe arrived there, yet ſhe could not now help caſting a look towards him who had firſt inſpired her with that pleaſing yet perplexing ſentiment till late unknown to her; but the thought inſtantly occuring to her mind that he was then contemplating on her for whom he had left his uncle's houſe, it obliterated for a moment the tender ſenſation, and made her ſtrike into a different path to avoid him.

After walking through various avenues,

they arrived at that gloomy receſs where ſtood almoſt ſecluded the temple dedicated to Solitude.

" What a romantic ſpot !" exclaimed Auguſta: " it is no wonder there is an air of melancholy diffuſed over the countenance of Somers ; it becomes habitual to him through living in this retired and unfrequented ſituation."

About fifty paces from the temple was a ſmall rock of eaſy aſcent, covered with underwood, down which ran a trifling ſtream of land water, that was checked in its progreſs, ſo as to create ſeveral ſmall caſcades, the murmuring of which greatly added to the gloom of the ſituation ; nothing was heard ſave that and the notes of different birds, which ſeemed to vie with each other in melodious harmony.

" I ſhould

" I ſhould conclude," ſaid Sir Charles, " from the retired ſituation of this temple, it incloſes a cold-bath:" then advancing to the window, he beheld the portraits; " What have we here?" cried he; " Venus and Cupid, I ſuppoſe, and executed in a maſterly manner."

" I differ with you," ſaid Auguſta; " it is evident the perſon who executed the piece perfectly underſtands his profeſſion, he would therefore not have dreſſed her in modern attire; beſides which, although it repreſents a tolerable figure, yet ſhe falls far ſhort of the beauty and mien uſually expreſſed in the perſon of Venus. I have heard Somers has been married, and is ſeparated from his wife; this then is certainly the portrait of her and his child."

"You are right," rejoined Sir Charles: "and on the table lye ſeveral letters and papers: here is where he retires to indulge his melancholy. I am ſurpriſed that Somers, as a man of ſenſe, has not more fortitude than to become a prey to a hopeleſs paſſion for a woman who in all probability has uſed him ill: he will never regain his ſpirits while he practiſes this line of conduct. Retired from the world, where he has no friend to open his mind to, no one to rouſe him from the ſtupor he has fallen into, he indulges his ſorrows in obſcurity; and I am greatly miſtaken if his life in the end will not be ſhortened by it, for his appearance is wonderfully altered for the worſe of late. Remind me, Auguſta," continued he, "that I inſiſt on his relating his ſtory, for

for without I know the cauſe, it will be impoſſible for me to apply a remedy: he muſt not be ſuffered to be thus loſt for the want of a friend to adviſe with."

"I will not only remind you," replied Auguſta, "but I will add my requeſt to yours. I am greatly miſtaken if Somers ever merited ill treatment; he appears naturally humane and whatever might formerly have characteriſed him, yet here no blemiſh appears in him; on the contrary, he is an ornament to the human ſpecies."

"You have drawn a faithful portrait of him," ſaid Theodore, who was led to the ſpot by the ſound of their voices.

After the congratulations of the morning had paſſed, Sir Charles enquired of Theodore where Somers was gone, and

received for anſwer that he was viſiting Mrs. Bentley in company with Freeman.

Thither Sir Charles determined to bend his courſe, and requeſted Theodore would conduct them to the place, to which he readily aſſented, and they arrived while Somers and Sir Thomas were diſputing as before related.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

FORTUNATELY for Sir Thomas, the arrival of Sir Charles, Auguſta, and Theodore, put an end to the diſpute between him and Somers.

Sir Charles profeſſed himſelf happy in meeting him, as the eſtate before mentioned, that he was in treaty for, belonged to Sir Thomas; while they withdrew to converſe on it, Freeman took an opportunity of introducing Clariſſa to the acquaintance of Auguſta.

This was a ſeaſonable relief for the latter; ſhe had treated Theodore during their walk with a conſtrained civility foreign to her feelings.

A conduct

A conduct ſo much the reverſe to what he had before experienced from her greatly diſconcerted him, and his uneaſineſs of mind appeared viſible to all. Auguſta witneſſed it, but concluded it originated in her apparent want of reſpect; the company, therefore, of Clariſſa relieved her from the unpleaſant conſtraint ſhe had impoſed on herſelf, and afforded her an opportunity of entering into a more animated converſation, in which ſhe expected Theodore would bear a part, but his ſpirits were too much oppreſſed by the paſt to admit of his taking any pleaſure in ſociety.

Somers beheld the viſible uneaſineſs in his countenance, and enquired if he were well; or if he had received any intelligence that occaſioned it.

Theodore

Theodore not thinking it prudent to venture upon an explanation before ſo many hearers, was neceſſitated to plead indiſpoſition.

Somers recommended him to take a glaſs of hot wine, in which requeſt Auguſta joined, accompanying it with ſuch a tender ſolicitude in her look, that ought to have done away every unpleaſant ſuſpicion in him.

Theodore, to get rid of all further importunity, acceded to the propoſal, at the ſame time, penetrated with gratitude for the attention manifeſted by Auguſta, his eyes did not fail to ſpeak the language of his heart, and ought to have given her cauſe to ſuſpect the truth of Freeman's aſſertion; but ſo it too frequently happens, that when the mind is once prepoſſeſſed with a belief of any particular circumſtance;

ſtance, it requires many repeated proofs to the contrary before the party can be brought to diſcredit it.

Clariſſa undertook to prepare the wine, but Somers was too much concerned for his young friend to permit any perſon to attend him except himſelf; he therefore requeſted ſhe would join the company of Auguſta, and leave Theodore in his charge.

As ſoon as they were alone, Theodore, who abhorred all kind of impoſition, informed Somers that he was not bodily ill, but that an incident of a trifling nature, which he could not then explain, had depreſſed his ſpirits, and rendered him unfit for company.

Somers, on the receipt of this intelligence, profeſſed an anxiety to return home.

Sir

Sir Charles invited Sir Thomas to dine with him; and Clariſſa received a preſſing invitation from Auguſta to ſpend the day with her, which, with the conſent of Mrs. Bentley, ſhe accepted.

Sir Charles likewiſe requeſted the company of Somers and Theodore, and was greatly mortified on meeting with a refuſal.

Auguſta added her intreaty to that of her father's in behalf of Mr. Somers; but Freeman being preſent, and recollecting the charge he had laid to her the preceding night, ſhe could not compel her tongue to include the name of Theodore in the invitation.

This mark of diſreſpect added ſtrength to the ſuſpicions of Theodore, and almoſt deprived him of the power of reſpiration.

Unable

Unable to endure this mortifying ſcene, or be ſubject to any further marked contempt, which, when coming from the object we moſt admire, is the more ſeverely felt, he propoſed to walk on before; but Somers inſiſted on accompanying him, and Sir Charles determining not to part from their ſociety till they had croſſed the ferry, they all took leave of the cottage.

As Auguſta was deſcending the ſteps that led down to the ſide of the river, her foot ſlipt, and Theodore, who was behind her, ſtarted forward, and caught her in the act of falling, which prevented her from receiving an injury; but, in endeavouring to recover himſelf, he loſt the ſtep, and pitched upon his elbow; yet, inſtantly ſpringing up, no notice was taken of it: he had eſcaped unhurt.

In

In a few minutes they were landed on the oppoſite ſide, and Theodore, obſerving ſome duſt on his arm, took out his handkerchief for the purpoſe of wiping it off.

Auguſta, fearing he had ſuſtained ſome injury, aſked him if he were hurt.

"*Not by the fall,*" replied he.

Theodore had laid a peculiar emphaſis on his reply, and a tear ſtood quivering on his eye-lid as he gave it, which inclined Auguſta to think he had ſuſtained ſome other injury; but ſhe was prevented from purſuing the enquiry further, on account of her father joining her at that period.

Having arrived at the ſpot where it was neceſſary to part, in order that they might reach their reſpective homes, Somers took Freeman aſide: "I entruſt Clariſſa,"

Clariſſa," ſaid he, "to your protection; take eſpecial care not to leave her with Sir Thomas; and if I am not able to join you towards the evening, I requeſt you will ſee her ſafe to Mrs. Bentley's."

Freeman aſſured him that he might depend upon him.

Somers and Theodore now took leave of the party, and ſhortly reached their ſequeſtered habitation.

No ſooner had they ſeated themſelves in the parlour, than Somers requeſted he would relate to him the incident which had ſo much depreſſed his ſpirits.

"I feel," replied Theodore, "the full force of your obſervation of yeſterday, that 'That man ventures more than his life, who places his happineſs in another's keeping.' I have ſuffered my vanity to lead me into an error; but I hope by fortitude

fortitude I ſhall in time expel this weakneſs."

He then drew a picture of Auguſta's conduct to him on the preceding day, and compared it with the treatment he had juſt experienced. "I will leave you to judge," continued he, "if I have not been treated with a marked contempt, or at leaſt a cool indifference, bordering upon rudeneſs."

"Perhaps," rejoined Somers, "Sir Charles has been making uſe of his penetration, and by his wonderful ſagacity has ſuggeſted ſomething unfavourable concerning you, which may have driven Auguſta to the neceſſity of adopting this line of conduct."

"I have every reaſon to believe that is not the caſe," replied Theodore, "as nothing could exceed the reſpect I met with

with from Sir Charles during the morning. Her conduct is the result of caprice; a disposition inherent in too many of the sex. I am but a novice in love, and was not able yesterday to hide the sensations that I felt; by which she discovered the true state of my heart, and thinks it a duty incumbent on her, as a female, to tyrannise over my feelings; but so mean a practice, for which I cannot sufficiently express my disapprobation, will never agree with a disposition like mine, nor shall she ever again have an opportunity of practising a similar conduct towards me, as I have made up my mind never to see her more."

"Stop for a moment," cried Somers, "before you seriously resolve."

"I am firm," resumed Theodore; "my determination is the result of cool deliberation.

ration. If ſhe have no affection for me, I feel it will be highly improper for me to truſt myſelf again in her company, ſeeing that ſo ſhort an acquaintance has been able to deſtroy my peace. If, on the contrary (which cannot be the caſe), ſhe have the ſmalleſt attachment, I am confident I never could be happy with a perſon who could diſguiſe her ſentiments merely to wound my feelings, by treating me with unmerited coolneſs and marked inſult in public company.

" I know that my ſingular introduction into your houſe, and more particularly her father's, is ſufficient to create ſuſpicions, and thoſe perhaps unfavourable; yet I ſhould have conceived a delicacy of ſentiment would have prevented her from being the firſt to treat me with contempt, more particularly as her father adopted

adopted ſo different a line of conduct: I muſt confeſs, that this amongſt the reſt leſſens her materially in my eſtimation; it is a conduct I could not have adopted to a perſon in a ſimilar ſituation with myſelf."

"I have ever made it a remark," rejoined Somers, "that when a lover meets with a diſappointment, however trifling, he ſuggeſts a thouſand circumſtances that never have or could occur, and makes himſelf wretched on the force of his own imaginations.

"Auguſta has certainly heard ſomething advanced in diſparagement of you, from which ſhe feels a neceſſity of aſſuming a more diſtant behaviour, till ſhe is ſatisfied reſpecting the truth of the information.

"As to caprice or indelicacy, I never

can

can believe ſhe poſſeſſes an atom of either. The face is generally an index to the mind: is it to be ſuppoſed a countenance that beams with every tender and compaſſionate ſentiment can be acquired by poſſeſſing a tyrannical, cruel, or capricious temper? or is it to be ſuppoſed ſhe has acquired that humility, that diffidence, and modeſty of carriage, by poſſeſſing a mind fraught with rudeneſs and indelicacy?

"You might with as much truth declare the ferocious appearance of the tyger was a certain criterion to judge of the kindneſs of his nature, or the mild appearance of the dove betokened the heart of a vulture, as to declare what you have reſpecting Auguſta. It is not all that you or any one can ſay will ever incline me to think otherwiſe, than that

all which is amiable in human nature and Auguſta are inſeparable. Some error has taken place. My advice to you is, to ſee her again, before you come to a poſitive deciſion."

"I ſhould eſteem myſelf unworthy of the favours I have received from you," replied Theodore, "if I did not attend to your advice, but I hope you will not oblige me to accompany you to Sir Charles's; we ſhall no doubt meet ſome time by accident: it would wound my pride to experience ſuch treatment at her father's, as it would incline me to think ſhe conceived I wanted to force my company where it was not deſired,"

"I had flattered myſelf," reſumed Somers, "as you are not ill, that I ſhould have been able to have prevailed on you to accompany me to Sir Charles's, as I

am

am anxious on account of Clariſſa. I do not wiſh her to form an acquaintance with Sir Thomas Blandford."

Theodore requeſted he might be no hindrance to him; and having promiſed to amuſe himſelf during his abſence, Somers, who could not account for the motive that induced Sir Thomas to viſit Mrs. Bentley's cottage, complied with the entreaty of Theodore, and left him for the purpoſe of attending Clariſſa at Sir Charles's.

Somers had no occaſion to have delivered ſo ſtrict a charge to Freeman concerning Clariſſa, for independent of the ſuſpicion Freeman entertained reſpecting Sir Thomas, Clariſſa had a friend within his breaſt that would have prompted him to afford her every care and protection within his power.

When Somers arrived at Sir Charles's, he found Freeman and Clariſſa walking in the pleaſure-ground, and engaged in converſation; Sir Charles and Sir Thomas were cloſeted upon buſineſs reſpecting the eſtate that the former was in treaty for; and Auguſta was endeavouring to paſs away a dull moment by playing a few airs on the piano; but inſtead of it affording her relief, it only attuned her ſoul to tender ideas, and called to her mind the object of all others ſhe moſt wiſhed to forget.

She had recapitulated in her mind the laſt words made uſe of by Theodore when ſhe aſked him if he was hurt, and he replied "Not by the fall;" the manner of his expreſſing himſelf plainly informed her he had ſuſtained ſome injury, and while ſhe was pondering upon what it could

could be, her favourite ſervant Ellen made her appearance.

This girl was the daughter of a tradeſman once in a reſpectable ſphere of life, but whom misfortunes had humbled; he had beſtowed on her a good education, in addition to which ſhe was a tolerable figure, and Heaven had endowed her with a real goodneſs of heart.

It is therefore not in the leaſt extraordinary that Auguſta, who eſteemed merit wherever ſhe found it, and in a country place, where ſociety does not always preſent itſelf, ſhould have made of her a confidential friend, by repoſing in her breaſt thoſe ſecrets which it is a pleaſurable relief to unburthen: nor do I know how ſhe could avoid it; for ſo tenderly ſolicitous was ſhe in behalf of her miſtreſs, and ſo anxious to oblige, and promote

her happineſs in the moſt trivial particular, that it could not fail of attracting the notice, and enſuring the eſteem, of the amiable Auguſta.

No ſooner, therefore, had Ellen entered the room, and obſerved the uneaſineſs depicted in the countenance of her miſtreſs, than ſhe exclaimed, "Bleſs me! madam, what can have happened?—you ſeem unhappy."

"I am indeed unhappy," replied Auguſta; "and long, very long, I fear, will it be before I ſhall feel that peace of mind I uſed to enjoy."

"You ſurpriſe me!" reſumed Ellen; "what can have occaſioned this?—I thought yeſterday you ſeemed more particularly happy than uſual, and concluded you had made a valuable acquaintance in Mr. Theodore, who would relieve many a dull

and

and melancholy hour during your ſtay in the country. I expected, as Sir Charles took you to Cliffdown-lodge this morning, that Mr. Somers and his young friend would have returned with you."

"Ah! my dear girl," reſumed Auguſta, "this is partly what makes me unhappy; Theodore is not well."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Ellen, "what will become of him; he never can be properly attended at the lodge; there is nobody but a couple of peeviſh old maids to wait on him: beſides, he will be loſt for the want of ſociety. If you could prevail on Sir Charles to have him removed here, I am ſure we could attend him much better; and (I may be miſtaken) but I think he would be far more happy."

A tranſient bluſh overſpread the countenance of Auguſta, which terminated

with a ſigh. "I know not," ſaid Auguſta, "whether he is really unwell, or only makes uſe of it as a plea to excuſe ſome vexation of mind, for he appeared extremely unhappy this morning. I could not enquire the cauſe, as Edward was preſent, and that for the following reaſons."—

Auguſta then informed Ellen of her ſentiments in behalf of Theodore; recapitulated the ſuſpicions of Edward, as likewiſe her denial of it, together with the information ſhe afterwards received from him reſpecting the affections of Theodore being otherwiſe engaged.

She next took a minute ſurvey of her conduct to him during the morning; the depreſſion of his ſpirits; his fall in endeavouring to ſave her; his laſt words, which implied he had received ſome injury; and concluded by expreſſing herſelf

at

at a loſs to account for the cauſe from whence it originated, at the ſame time requeſting her opinion concerning it.

" I am afraid," replied Ellen, " that you have overacted your part, and, by putting a reſtraint upon yourſelf, adopted a conduct towards him that he did not expect, or by any means deſerve.

" He is not aware of the motives you had in acting as you have done, but is feelingly alive to his own ſituation. He knows under what ſuſpicious circumſtances he was introduced to your acquaintance, and concludes you treat him with contempt on account of ſome unfavourable impreſſion you have received. Neither are you certain that Mr. Freeman's information is correct; he may have advanced it for the purpoſe of ſatiſfying his doubts; and, if that is the fact,

think what Theodore's feelings muſt be in receiving ſuch treatment from you. In my opinion, it fully accounts for the injury he alluded to; and if he could have ſpoken his mind more plainly, he would have ſaid, 'Tis not by the fall I have ſuſtained an injury, it is you, Auguſta, that have wounded my feelings in the tendereſt point.'"

"Hold," cried Auguſta, interrupting her; "get me a glaſs of water."

"Bleſs me, madam!" exclaimed Ellen, "you are unwell: I wiſh I had not ſaid a word; perhaps I was wrong; and now I think again, I dare to ſay I was."

"Do as I requeſt," ſaid Auguſta, "or I ſhall ſhortly be worſe."

Ellen inſtantly obeyed, and after a few minutes Auguſta was relieved by her tears.

"Yes,

"Yes, Ellen," reſumed ſhe, "I feel that what you have ſaid is right:—how could I be ſo abſent as not to know the cauſe!—what muſt he think of me!—It has been my practice, even to the greateſt ſtranger, to ſmooth the brow of ſorrow; is it poſſible, then, that I ſhould have ſo far forgot myſelf as to wound the feeling of him who, of all others, I wiſh moſt to oblige!—and yet I have undoubtedly been guilty of this.

"What reparation can I make?—for I ſhall be anxious till I have reinſtated myſelf in his good opinion."

While they were converſing on this point, Somers made his appearance in the 'fore-court.

Auguſta ſaw him the moment he entered. "Oh, Heavens!" ſaid ſhe, "here is Mr. Somers!—and alone!—Theodore is

certainly ill, or is offended, and will not come. Go, Ellen, meet Mr. Somers as he enters the houſe, and inform him I am alone, and ſhall be happy to ſpeak with him."

Ellen haſtened to obey her; in the mean time Auguſta endeavoured to compoſe herſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

WHEN Somers entered the room, Auguſta roſe from her ſeat.

"I took the liberty," ſaid ſhe, "to requeſt your company out of charity, for the rude creatures have all left me.

"Pray, how is your young friend? I preſume, as you have left him at home, he is better."

Somers replied, that "Theodore was better, but that he requeſted to be left behind."

"That is ſingular," reſumed Auguſta: "I am afraid he gives way to a melancholy diſpoſition. You ſhould endeavour to rouſe him from it. He appeared greatly oppreſſed

oppreſſed this morning; has any thing occurred to occaſion him uneaſineſs?"

Somers did not think he ſhould act a prudent part by ſtating the real cauſe, as he had not Theodore's permiſſion ſo to do; and therefore replied, "It is not to be ſuppoſed a perſon in his ſituation can always appear in high ſpirits; you ſhould conſider," ſaid he, "he has left a home, where probably he has formed ſome tender friendſhips; to be deprived of theſe, and thrown amongſt ſtrangers, will naturally affect his ſpirits for a time; but I have no doubt he will ſhortly habituate himſelf to their abſence, and become more reſigned to it, ſince there is an abſolute neceſſity for it."

This excuſe of Somers, although perfectly natural, was the worſt he could have made in behalf of his friend, as

Auguſta

Auguſta interpreted every ſentence of it into a confirmation of the truth of Edward's relation.

She concluded the *tender friendſhip* he alluded to was no leſs than an unconquerable attachment he had formed for ſome female; and replied, that "he was at an age when youth are moſt liable to receive an impreſſion, and that, from the ſmall judgment ſhe was able to form of him, ſhe did not conceive he could eaſily forget engagements of that nature, or enjoy any real happineſs in the abſence of the party."

"You carry the point too far," reſumed Somers. "I have as high an opinion of Theodore as you can have; but I do not think he could form any friendſhip that would incapacitate him from enjoying the company of another, or of being ſo unhappy

unhappy as you deſcribe in the abſence of the party. I only ſpoke of what is perfectly natural, and endeavoured to account for the uneaſineſs of his mind from being with ſtrangers. I know not any particular friendſhip he has formed."

"Come, come, Mr. Somers," rejoined Auguſta, "do not unſay what you have already ventured to relate. I know you ſcorn an untruth, and would not willingly deceive me; you certainly have truly ſtated the cauſe of your friend's uneaſineſs; therefore, why ſhould you endeavour to prevaricate, or why is the ſecret to be withheld from me in particular?"

"Then, to tell you the truth," reſumed Somers, "you are the laſt perſon in the world I ſhould wiſh to deceive; and ſince you drive me to ſtate the fact, I verily believe that a little of your ſociety, joined with

with the agreeable humour you entertained him with yeſterday, would afford him more pleaſure than the abſence of all his friends can give him pain."

Notwithſtanding the firm belief Auguſta had to the contrary, yet this expreſſion naturally forced a bluſh into her countenance, and prevented her for a few moments from replying. She would have given the world to have believed it; yet, conceiving it could not be the caſe, and that Somers was trifling with her, ſhe replied, "I did not think, Mr. Somers, that any conduct on my part would have made you conſider me a fit object for your rallery."

"I beg your pardon," reſumed Somers, "perhaps I was wrong; I will ſay no more on the ſubject: ſuppoſe, therefore,

fore, to change the ſcene, we go in ſearch of Edward and Miſs Leſley."

Now would Auguſta have given any thing to have recalled her laſt expreſſion, ſhe wiſhed to ſpeak on that ſubject of all others that was neareſt to her heart; and repulſed Somers merely for the purpoſe of enforcing an explanation, which ſhe thought he would be neceſſitated to give in his own defence, ſo eager was ſhe to find ſome grounds on which ſhe could erect a hope; and therefore replied, that ſhe would rather remain in the houſe, for that the day was too warm, and the ſun was very powerful. "And ſo," continued ſhe, "Theodore would rather remain at the lodge, and ſpend an agreeable day with your venerable ſpinſters, than be troubled with our ſociety?"

Somers

Somers ſaw the ſtrong deſire ſhe had to renew the converſation, but feeling a wiſh to be perfectly ſatisfied reſpecting his ſuſpicions, that he might thereby be enabled to relieve the mind of his young friend, he determined to give ſuch a reply as would force her into a further explanation: "Why really, Miſs Freeman," ſaid he, "you muſt excuſe me from delivering my opinion, as by repeating what I have already ſtated, or by adding to it, I ſhould perchance gain your diſpleaſure: I think it more prudent to be ſilent."

"I beg your pardon," reſumed Auguſta, "it was not my meaning to convey an offence to you by the reply I made, or to ſilence you on the ſubject; I have too high an opinion of you to ſuppoſe you meant to inſinuate any thing that would be improper for me to hear, and

therefore eſtimated your remark accordingly: you muſt be aware that I have no reaſon for purſuing this converſation, but merely on account of the young gentleman, who I think muſt be extremely dull in your abſence; and ſince he has recovered, I think I will even venture myſelf with you, and poſſibly we ſhall be able to perſuade him to accompany us.

Somers caſt a ſignificant look towards her.

"I am afraid, Miſs Freeman," replied he, "you will find the day *too warm*, beſides *the ſun is very powerful.*"

Auguſta felt the full force of this retort; ſhe feared that ſhe had gone too far, and turned her face to hide the crimſon bluſh that diſplayed itſelf in her countenance.

As ſoon as ſhe could recover herſelf,

"Mr.

" Mr. Somers," ſaid ſhe, " you treat me unkindly by harbouring improper ſuſpicions.

" To deal ingenuouſly with you, my only motive was this, I thought that Theodore might be diſſatisfied with either the conduct of Sir Charles or myſelf this morning, which prompted him to remain at your houſe: I, therefore, propoſed going with you for the only purpoſe of doing away any unfavourable impreſſion he might have received."

" I knew," reſumed Somers, " that goodneſs and Auguſta Freeman were inſeparable.

" You have defined the cauſe of his uneaſineſs and his abſence, I ſhall therefore be proud to attend you on ſo praiſeworthy an errand."

" No, ſir," reſumed Auguſta, " I cannot

not now think of going, after the ſuſpicion betrayed by your looks and words, becauſe I feel that I do not merit it in the ſmalleſt degree."

"If that be really the caſe," rejoined Somers, "better by far is it for my young friend's future peace that he remain where he is: but, leſt it ſhould not be ſo, permit me to add a few words;—few and fleeting are the moments allotted for happineſs in this life; they are, therefore, by far too precious to be thrown away through a miſtaken pride, or a deſire to tantalize each other."

Auguſta felt convinced of the truth of this aſſertion, and in all probability would in return have entruſted him with a ſmall ſhare of her confidence, but was prevented from ſo doing by the entrance of her father and Sir Thomas.

Sir

Sir Charles had juſt received a draught copy from the attorney of the conveyance to the eſtate he was in treaty for.

After thanking Somers for his company, and enquiring concerning Theodore, "Come," ſaid he, "I know you are half a lawyer; have the goodneſs to peruſe this draught."

Somers ſat down beſide Sir Charles for that intent.

'A thought now occurred to him whereby he could ſerve the unfortunate Mr. Bridport, who was in priſon at the ſuit of Sir Thomas for rent due on part of the eſtate in queſtion; and when he came to that part which conveyed it, he took out his pencil and interlined, 'And likewiſe all arrears of rent due on the ſaid eſtate,' &c. then ſhewed it to Sir Charles, at the ſame time requeſting him to inſiſt on it, as he would

would thereby have an opportunity of ſerving an unfortunate character, by reſcuing him from the gripe of his oppreſſor.

Sir Thomas was at that time converſing with Auguſta at the further end of the room, and did not obſerve that any alteration was made or ſuggeſted by Somers, which might have led him to ſuſpect his motive; but ſhortly after turning round, and noticing the draught laying on the table, he aſked Somers if it was all right.

"Perfectly ſo," replied Somers.

"There is one particular that has occurred to me," rejoined Sir Charles; "I may as well ſave you any further trouble, by having the arrears of rent due on the eſtate."

Sir Thomas, not conſidering his motive, replied,

replied, "I ſee you are determined to have a good bargain; however, as we have come to a right underſtanding hitherto, I ſhall ſcarcely differ with you concerning it: you may inſert it."

This buſineſs being adjuſted, "Now," ſaid Somers, "you have nothing to conſider but when theſe deeds are to be executed."

Sir Charles declared himſelf ready with the purchaſe-money; and Sir Thomas fearing he ſhould have occaſion ſhortly to leave the country, it was propoſed that the draught ſhould be returned by the clerk, who was waiting in the houſe, with orders for it to be engroſſed and ready for execution on the following day.

The draught being returned, Sir Charles

requeſted the company of Somers and Theodore to atteſt the execution.

"I will endeavour," replied Somers, "to prevail on him to attend."

"Prevail on him!" repeated Sir Charles; "what makes the lad ſo ſhy, and why have we not his company to-day?—Is he at home?"

Somers replied in the affirmative.

Sir Charles rung the bell: a ſervant attending, he deſired him to take his carriage and fetch Theodore; "Tell him," continued he, "I muſt have his company."

"Had you not better write a note?" ſaid Somers.

"Very true," rejoined Sir Charles; "the young gentleman my feel himſelf ſlighted." Then taking pen, ink, and paper, he wrote the invitation.

Auguſta ſtept forward: "Add my requeſt," ſaid ſhe; "I long to take a leſſon on the piano."

Auguſta could not convey this requeſt without a bluſh, which did not eſcape the obſervation of Sir Thomas.

Somers at the ſame time whiſpered Auguſta, "My life upon it," ſaid he, "the laſt requeſt will bring him."

This whiſper likewiſe reached the ear of Sir Thomas, as he was ſitting cloſe to Auguſta when Somers uttered it.

"Who is this Theodore?" ſaid Sir Thomas.

"A new acquaintance," replied Sir Charles; "the ſame young gentleman you ſaw with me this morning: he was introduced here under ſingular circumſtances."

Sir Charles then very incautiouſly related all he knew concerning him.

Sir Thomas treaſured up in his mind this intelligence. He remembered the conduct of Somers when Theodore appeared ill in the morning, and concluded he was greatly attached to him. He was happy on the receipt of this information, as it would furniſh him with an opportunity of being revenged on him for the language and threats he made uſe of reſpecting Mr. Bridport.

Sir Thomas had another and a ſtronger motive: from the firſt moment he beheld Auguſta, he fancied he felt ſomething like an attachment for her, at leaſt, a ſtrong deſire to have ſo lovely a girl in his poſſeſſion.

Sir Charles likewiſe (independent of his

his family eſtate) was reputed rich: this added force and beauty to the already incomparable perfections of Auguſta. He could not therefore behold an anxiety on her part for the company of Theodore, without feeling ſeverely mortified.

To be more ſatisfied concerning the verity of his ſuſpicions, he determined narrowly to watch them during the day, and to regulate his future conduct according to what he might be able to diſcover.

Theodore, on the receipt of the letter with Auguſta's invitation annexed, made not the leaſt heſitation of complying with the requeſt; but ſuffered himſelf to be immediately conveyed to Sir Charles.

No ſooner did he make his appearance than Auguſta, who was in converſation with Sir Thomas, advanced towards him,

and welcomed him with a cordiality, accompanied by an apparent ſincerity, ſo totally different from her conduct in the morning, that could not fail of exciting his ſurpriſe.

Chief part of the day was ſpent in the utmoſt conviviality.

Somers did not think proper to renew the converſation of the morning with Sir Thomas, leſt it ſhould call to his recollection the covenant inſerted in the draught of conveyance.

Freeman paid Clariſſa marked attention, which appeared far from being diſagreeable to her.

Theodore, imagining he had perfectly reinſtated himſelf in the good opinion of Auguſta, was in ecſtacy; but his happineſs was of ſhort duration: for Somers, obſerving the uncommon attention he paid

paid, and the pleaſure that beamed in his countenance when he addreſſed her; obſerving likewiſe that Sir Thomas attentively ſurveyed them, and fearing leſt Sir Charles ſhould ſuſpect him from what he ſaw, or have his ſuſpicions raiſed through the malice of Sir Thomas, took an opportunity of whiſpering a caution to Theodore.

The words of Somers brought a bluſh on the countenance of Theodore, which did not eſcape the obſervation of Auguſta: ſhe ſuſpected that herſelf was the ſubject of their converſation, and concluded that Somers was relating all that had paſſed between them prior to Theodore's being ſent for.

She took a rapid ſurvey of her conduct during the day, and felt convinced that

ſhe had in ſome meaſure betrayed her ſentiments.

This mortified her pride; but thinking it not too late to repair the injury, ſhe reſolved to aſſume a more diſtant behaviour for the reſidue of the day, taking care not to wound the feelings of Theodore a ſecond time, by an unneceſſary coolneſs, but to treat him with civility.

This alteration was quickly felt by the enamoured Theodore; he was at a loſs to account for it; he reviewed his conduct ſince he had entered the houſe, but could not tax himſelf with any want of reſpect that ſhould occaſion this change.

Auguſta propoſed a walk, which all the parties agreed to excepting Theodore, who, to get rid of this perplexing ſcene, requeſted

requeſted he might be permitted to remain behind; alleging for an excuſe, that he had not totally recovered from the indiſpoſition that attacked him in the morning.

Being now left by himſelf, he ruminated on the various occurrences of the day, and inveſtigated his own feelings, from which he found it would be impoſſible for him to eſtimate Auguſta as a common acquaintance. A few hours had deprived him of that peace of mind he wiſhed to enjoy.

He concluded it would be madneſs to perſevere longer in her acquaintance, without receiving ſome aſſurance, or feeling from circumſtances ſome hope, that his affection would be ultimately returned.

Theodore had frequently amuſed himſelf by conveying his thoughts in poetry; and,

and, although he was far from excelling in this particular, yet he could not refrain from writing his opinion in a few lines.

As ſoon as he had finiſhed it the party returned; and Sir Charles, perceiving the paper on the table, exclaimed, "Oh, ho!—a ſcrap from the muſes. What, this, I ſuppoſe, is a ſong of your own compoſing:—let us hear it."

The reſt of the company joining in the requeſt, Theodore ſelected a tune ſuitable to the words, and ſung the following ſong, accompanied by the inſtrument:

I.

The buſy fly around the light
In playful humour flies,
Till his burnt wings aſſaults his flight,
Or in the flame he dies.

II. Thus

II.

Thus man, betray'd by beauty's charms,
Becomes a willing ſlave;
And forfeits freedom in her arms,
Or ſinks into the grave.

Theodore having concluded, Sir Charles obſerved that he had known what it was to be in love.

"I ſhould rather imagine," rejoined Sir Thomas, "that Theodore is at preſent in that ſituation; as it is the folly of all lovers to ſuppoſe they never can be able to ſurmount a diſappointment."

"That is very true," reſumed Sir Charles; "for had he conquered it, he could not now preſume that death would be the conſequence of meeting a refuſal from his dear dulcinea. Come, Theodore," continued he, "confeſs, who

who is this paragon of beauty, that has been able to deprive you of your ſenſes?"

"I ſhould deem myſelf unfit to live," replied Theodore, "if I could ſee every accompliſhment of perſon and mind centred in one enchanting object, and not feel the force of them; ſuch an one there is; but to name the party at this time would be uſeleſs, therefore you muſt excuſe me."

Edward thought he ſaw a viſible uneaſineſs pourtrayed in the features of Auguſta; and feeling inclined to puniſh her for the deception ſhe had practiſed towards him, he whiſpered to her, "Now," ſaid he, "you hear a candid confeſſion from him; I hope you feel inclined to believe what I told you?"

"Really,"

"Really," reſumed Sir Charles, addreſſing himſelf to Theodore, "I cannot excuſe you, for I am all anxiety to know who it is that you imagine poſſeſſes theſe united accompliſhments; I will anſwer for it ſhe is ſome ordinary creature; it is the fate of all lovers to be blind to their miſtreſſes' imperfections."

Theodore was piqued at this alluſion to his want of taſte; and without conſidering the conſequences, anticipated the triumph he ſhould enjoy by naming her: "I feel a ſtrong inclination to oblige you," replied he.

"Hold," cried Somers; "take prudence to your aid. Poſſibly the lady may be known by ſome here preſent; I requeſt, therefore, her name may remain in oblivion, at leaſt till ſome future period."

"I ſtand

"I ſtand corrected," rejoined Theodore.

The eyes of Somers and Auguſta met at this juncture; there was a marked contempt viſible in the latter, that totally diſconcerted the former; ſhe recollected he had endeavoured in the morning to perſuade her that Theodore preferred her ſociety to that of any other, and having interpreted the laſt ſentence of Theodore into a direct contradiction of what Somers had before informed her, ſhe looked upon him as a maſter-piece of deception; and took the firſt opportunity of drawing Clariſſa away from their company, and retiring.

Sir Charles having agreed, at the requeſt of Somers, to drop the ſubject, nothing further was ſaid concerning it; but news

and

and politics filled up the vacant time during the abſence of the ladies.

Auguſta returned to tea, but did not ſhare in their converſation, directing the whole of her diſcourſe to Clariſſa.

The evening having advanced, Sir Thomas took his leave; and ſhortly after, Somers, Theodore, and Freeman, attended Clariſſa to the Cottage.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

T. Davison,
White-Friars.

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